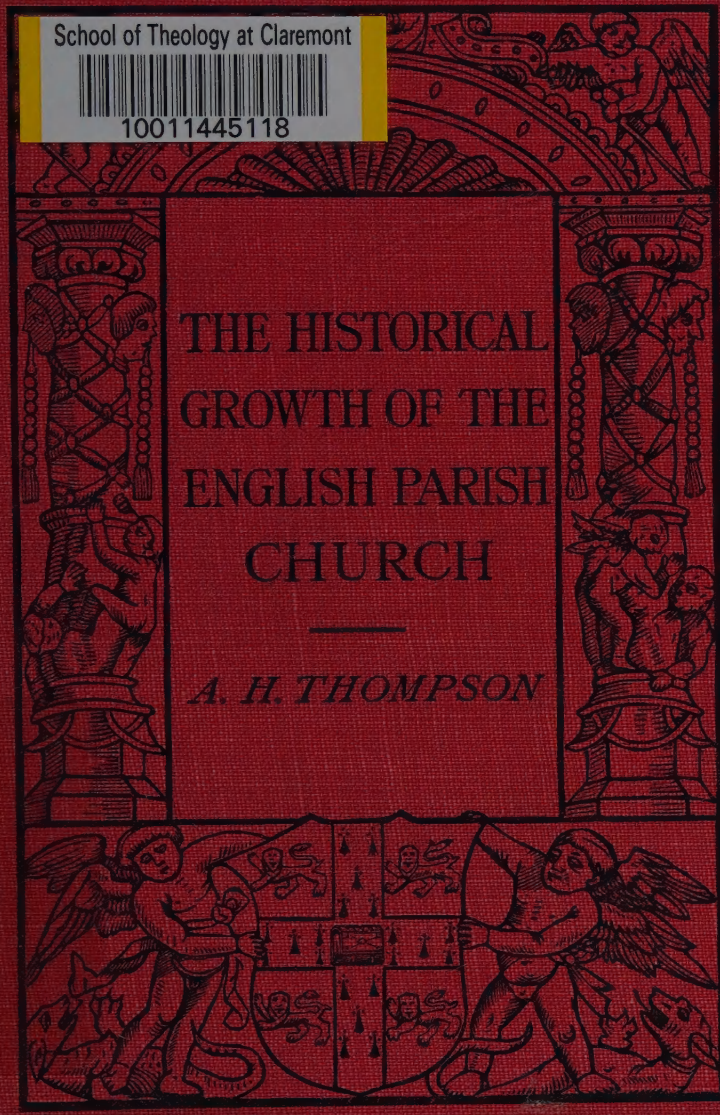
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THE HISTORICAL GROWTH OF THE ENGLISH PARISH CHURCH

A. H. THOMPSON



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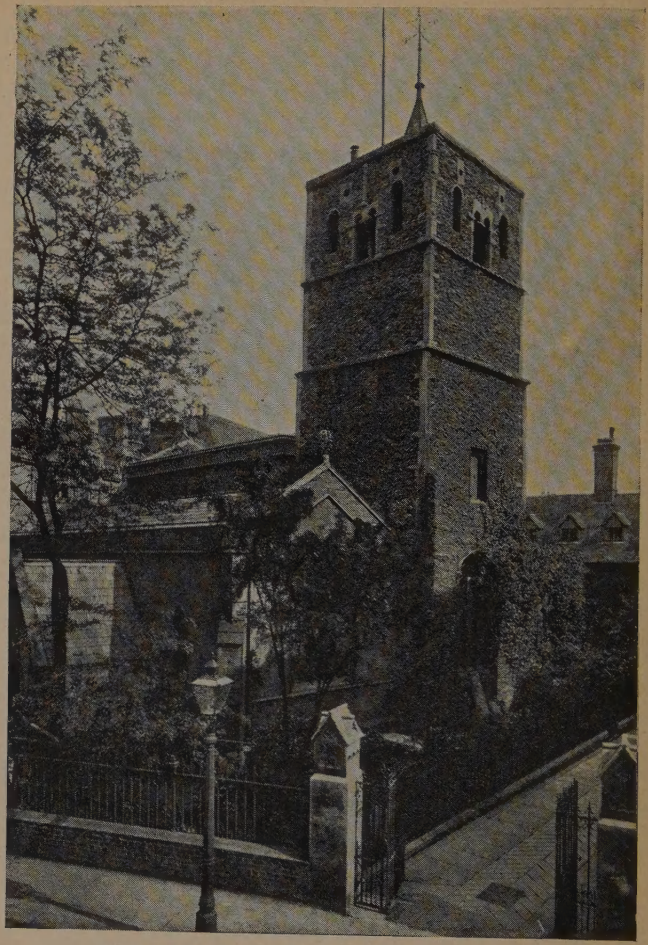
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St Benet's, Cambridge: west tower from N.W.

THE HISTORICAL GROWTH OF THE ENGLISH PARISH CHURCH

BY

A. HAMILTON THOMPSON
M.A., F.S.A.

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With the exception of the coat of arms at the foot, the design on the title page is a reproduction of one used by the earliest known Cambridge printer, John Siberch, 1521

PREFACE

THIS small book is intended to be a companion and complement to the writer's book in the same series on *The Ground Plan of the English Parish Church.* In that book the growth of the ground plan is treated with necessarily scanty reference to the circumstances to which, directly or indirectly, that growth is due. Some attempt is made in the present volume to supply an account of the historical conditions amid which our parish churches were built, to say something of the builders, and to remove the popular idea, still current even among educated people, that our architecture is mainly due to the profuse benefactions of the religious orders. A special chapter on chantry foundations, which played so large a part in the life of the later middle ages, follows the general historical chapter. The western tower, the porch, and the chancel are then described with more fulness than was possible in the description of the ground plan; and the decoration and furniture of the various parts of the church are treated in the closing chapter.

The writer returns thanks for much help to his wife, to whom a sketch and the plans in the book, except that of Burford, are due; to the Rev. J. C. Cox, LL.D., F.S.A., and to the Rev. R. M. Serjeantson, M.A., F.S.A., who have read through his proofs, and provided him with many useful suggestions; to the editor of the *Archaeological Journal*, for the use of the plan of Burford church; and to Messrs C. C. Hodges, J. P. Gibson, F.S.A., E. Kennerell, and A. J. Loughton, for the loan of photographs.

A. H. T.

April, 1911.

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CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARISH CHURCH

§ 1. The early history of the English parish church is obscure, owing to the fact that architectural remains of the earliest fabrics are somewhat scanty, and that their actual date still affords ground for dispute. The episcopal constitution of the Romano-British church is not fully known ; but it is probable that, as in Gaul, every considerable centre of population possessed within its walls a church, which followed the 'basilican' arrangement common to the Christian churches of the Roman empire. But while, on the continent of Europe, the ecclesiastical history of the chief provincial capitals remained unbroken, and the great cathedrals of the middle ages rose upon sites which had been, from the establishment of Christianity in the empire, the centres of the religious life of Roman cities, the continuous history of church-building in England was broken by the relapse into

heathenism which followed the victorious invasions of the Saxons. The history of church architecture begins again with the coming of St Augustine in 597 A.D. Of churches which may reasonably be said to have been built as an immediate result of his mission, there are several remains in Kent; and the famous church of St Martin at Canterbury is probably in large part the building which he and his companions used for their first services. There is more than one theory as to the original extent of the church; but there can be little doubt that the western part of the chancel, the south wall of which is built of Roman brick, is of Augustine's time. Bede tells us that Augustine found an earlier church, built during the Roman occupation, on this site or on a site closely corresponding to it. It is safe to assume that he repaired this building, and spared all that he could of its materials. Apart from the Kentish churches there remains, on the remote part of the Essex coast, a building known as St Peter's on the Wall, which appears to be connected architecturally with the Kentish group. Its history cannot be traced back earlier than about 653 A.D., when St Cedd was sent from Northumbria to preach to the East Saxons. One of his two chief missionary centres was the Roman city of Othona, then known as Ythanceaster, at the mouth of the Blackwater. Here he ordained and baptized: he also, says Bede, built churches in

several places. St Peter's on the Wall, now long disused, stands on the site of the eastern gateway of Othona, and is largely built of re-used Roman material. It presents difficulties of site and plan which forbid us to connect it positively with St Cedd ; but there is a high probability that it is his church, while, in point of plan, it is too closely allied to the Kentish group to admit of a doubt as to its connexion with those churches. The actual way in which the connexion came about is, however, a difficult problem to solve.

§ 2. There is much uncertainty with regard to the chronology of pre-Conquest architecture in England. From the actual masonry of the buildings it is difficult to gather much information. Saxon builders shewed little architectural skill : their methods were unprogressive; and the chief criterion by which we may estimate any degree of progress in their work is found in their efforts to develop the ground plan of their churches. The course of architectural evolution between the coming of St Augustine and the Norman conquest suffered more than one serious check. The later part of the seventh century, the age of Wilfrid and archbishop Theodore, was an epoch during which ecclesiastical art flourished. It is now that we arrive at the beginning of the history of the parish church as distinguished from the monastic missionary settlement of early Saxon times.

The churches which Augustine and his companions had founded at Canterbury and Rochester were churches of monasteries, established as missionary centres in a heathen kingdom. The work of evangelisation was carried on for a century afterwards by the agency of monastic communities. The churches of Benedict Biscop at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, Wilfrid's churches at Hexham and Ripon, the Mercian churches of Peterborough and Brixworth, were all churches of monks. But, as Christianity grew in the Saxon kingdoms, churches were naturally multiplied. Wilfrid himself was a large land-owner in Mercia, and may be credited with the building of churches upon his lands: the foundation of the monastery of Brixworth and the church of Barnack may be attributed to his influence. His example would be followed by others; and we shall not be far wrong if we look upon the private estate of Saxon times as identical with the early parish. Owners of large estates built churches upon their property; and undoubtedly the growth of church-building on private lands led to that organisation of the ecclesiastical system in England, which was the great work of Theodore's episcopate. During this period, the church plan was founded upon a compromise; but continental influence, if modified by contact with Celtic traditions, was strong; and this influence came from Italy through the channel of the Gallican church.

§ 3. When Wilfrid died in 709 A.D., the age of religious and artistic activity was already passing. The power of Northumbria was declining; and the record of the next hundred years is one of quarrels between the various tribal kings of Britain. At the end of the eighth century the Northmen appeared on the Northumbrian coast. Significant features of their activity were the destruction of the church of Lindisfarne and the sack of the monastery at Wearmouth. During the next fifty years, while the kingdom of Wessex was rising to the front place in English affairs, the incursions of the Danes became more constant. In 851 A.D. a Danish army took up its winter quarters in England. From Thanet and Sheppey the Northmen extended their ravages over the whole east coast. The army which defeated the East Anglian levies at Thetford in 870 marked its progress across Mercia and East Anglia by the destruction of monasteries, chief among them the abbey of Peterborough. During the next hundred years, under the constant pressure of Danish invasion, little or no church-building can have been done; and it is likely that, for a long time before 870, little progress had been made. In 958 or 959 Edgar the Peaceable succeeded to the throne of Wessex and became master of the whole of England. During his reign, which lasted till 975, the great ecclesiastics who rose to influence at his court, Dunstan, Oswald and Ethelwold, busied

themselves with the re-establishment of monasticism in England, and the rebuilding of churches. The activity of Oswald in Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, and at Ramsey in Huntingdonshire, of Ethelwold at Winchester, Ely and Peterborough, shews how widespread was the area of the destruction wrought by the Danes. This period of revival lasted until the beginning of the eleventh century. The Danish conquest under the heathen Swegen brought more destruction with it, and although Cnut restored the churches which his father had destroyed, it was probably not until the accession of Edward the Confessor in 1042 that another era of church-building began in earnest.

§ 4. During the religious revival under Dunstan and his fellow prelates, the reformers looked once more to the continent for inspiration. Gaul, however, was no longer a possible source. Between England and the French kingdom which was rising on the ruins of the Neustrian monarchy, lay the Danelaw of Gaul, the province of Normandy. Access to the old current of religious tradition, denied on that side, was unimpeded on the side of the Low Countries and Germany, where, along the Rhine, the Austrasian kingdom still pursued its existence under the powerful sway of the Saxon emperors who had superseded the house of Charles the Great. It was from monasteries in this district that the restoration

of the religious life in England was most powerfully helped; and with such help, came inevitably architectural influence. If we are to look anywhere for the immediate origin of such well-known features of pre-Conquest architectural detail as "long-and-short" work or strip-work, it is to be found in the early religious buildings of the Rhine provinces. Their ultimate origin was, no doubt, Italian; but during this period, English building indicates no such close communication with original sources as existed during the period of Gallo-Roman influence. The era of German influence lasted but a short time, and examples of it, though familiar from the peculiar details of their masonry, are comparatively few. The builders of the period immediately preceding the Conquest seem to have been thrown more upon their own resources, and to have abandoned German details gradually in favour of a more simple fashion of building. Certain German features, however, which had been imperfectly developed during the period of revival, persisted in their work; and the closest parallels to the English towers of the eleventh century, so common in Lincolnshire and parts of Yorkshire, are to be seen in western Germany, and in that part of Italy where German influence was most powerful.

§ 5. The development of Norman architecture in England was due to the increasing skill in construction which followed the Conquest. For the building

of the larger churches, foreign prelates relied on the help of Norman masons, trained in artistic methods far in advance of those which Saxon builders had learned to use. The great aisled churches of the monasteries, Durham, Winchester, Norwich, or Gloucester, planned and built under the superintendence of men who were in close touch with the contemporary art of Normandy, led the way, and provided patterns of architecture which could not fail to exercise an influence upon the smaller churches of the country. In the early parish churches of the Norman period, we cannot expect to find this influence strongly marked. Local masons had little opportunity of acquaintance with the more advanced craftsmanship of the Normans until some large cathedral or abbey church rose in their neighbourhood, and supplied them with a model. Even then their imitation would be rough and uncertain, until practice made perfect their first attempts. The model would also provide them with a plan far beyond the requirements of a parish church, where a single priest served a limited congregation. There was no need of the provision of a large quire or of a number of separate altars: the ritual necessaries were all of the simplest kind. The old plan therefore sufficed in most instances. It is in the masonry that we notice the earliest introduction of modifications and improvements. The thin Saxon walling gives place to more massive construction:

walls composed of a rubble core with facings of dressed stone take the place of the rubble masonry with through-stone quoins and dressings of the later Saxon period. The recessing of the arch, with shafts in its jambs, becomes gradually understood : the beginnings of the practice were rough and unintelligent, and it was not without difficulty that the local builder learned the structural use of jamb-shafts as supporting and corresponding to the orders of the arch above. Our country churches supply many instances of this faltering treatment of new motives. Here and there it is possible to trace the direct influence of some large Norman building on the work of the country mason. At Branston, four miles south-east of Lincoln, the western tower of the church belongs to the class which is common in the neighbourhood—a class whose origin is earlier than the introduction of Norman influence. Its masonry has several characteristics of the type known as Saxon. But the high arch of its western doorway, and the small arcades which have been introduced, on either side of the doorway, in the face of the tower, shew very clearly that its builder had seen Norman work, and was attempting, roughly, but not without success, to copy it. Further, the arch of its doorway, and the tall shafts, with crocketed capitals, which support it, are beyond doubt closely imitated from the lower arches of the Norman west front of Lincoln minster.

As the Norman church at Lincoln was consecrated in 1092, the tower at Branston can hardly be earlier than that date, and may be several years later. Such examples as this shew that there is still much to discover with regard to the chronology of the later Saxon architecture, and that the grasp of new methods by native builders was acquired very gradually.

§ 6. We know, from the indications with respect to certain counties supplied by Domesday Book, that in 1086 the number of parish churches in England corresponded closely to the number which existed until the comparatively modern sub-division of parishes. Domesday was not intended to be a directory or clergy list; and the return of the churches existing upon manors depended upon the view which its individual compilers took of their duties. We have seen that the earliest English churches were monastic centres of missionary influence, built on land granted by wealthy converts to Christianity. The revival at the end of the tenth century was also monastic. But, after the age of Dunstan, the monastic ideal suffered an eclipse. The parish churches of the later Saxon age, although many of them had been granted to, and remained the property of monasteries, were for the most part, if not entirely, served by secular priests who were under no monastic obligation. The parish was co-extensive, so far as we can tell, with the estate

of the Saxon landlord: in most cases the church was his property, the appointment of the priest lay in his hands, and the church and its advowson passed to the Norman land-owner who superseded him.

§ 7. With the Norman conquest came a great revival of monastic life. The conquerors founded and heaped benefactions on new monasteries, or enlarged the possessions of Norman abbeys by granting them new estates in England. Many manors and more churches thus became the property of religious houses; and, where the property of a benefactor was widely scattered, a monastery might acquire a number of churches in many different counties. Thus the church of Kirkby in Malhamdale, in west Yorkshire, became the property of the abbey of West Dereham, in Norfolk; while a moiety of the tithes of Gisburn, in the same neighbourhood, belonged to the nuns of Stainfield, near Lincoln. These gifts, in the first instance, depended entirely on the free will of pious benefactors. The monasteries were naturally expected to present suitable priests to the churches; but this was left to their discretion. The logical result of these unconditional benefactions was that, as time went on, many churches were totally appropriated by monasteries: the income from the tithes, which should have served for the support of parish priests, was absorbed by the religious proprietors. Bishops recognised the evil; and towards the

beginning of the thirteenth century steps were taken to check the control of monasteries over their subject churches. Archbishop Geoffrey Plantagenet in 1205 allowed the abbey of West Dereham to appropriate the fruits of the church of Kirkby in Malhamdale, but required them to reserve a stipend of ten marks yearly for a vicar. Such ordinations of vicarages became common within the next few years; and the great feature of the episcopate of Hugh of Wells, bishop of Lincoln 1209–35, was the provision of vicars, not monks, but secular priests with sufficient stipends, in the appropriated churches of his huge diocese. The monastery was usually allowed to take the greater tithes, *i.e.* the tithes of corn, for itself, the smaller tithes, or a sum in commutation of them, being reserved to the vicar. The study of episcopal registers shews that these provisions were sometimes evaded; and anyone who has made out lists of vicars of appropriated churches knows that frequently long gaps occur, in which it is probable that the monastery allowed the presentation to lapse unchecked; but the ordination of vicarages was in great measure a cure for the evil. However, during the thirteenth century, laymen still continued to present religious bodies with large gifts of property. The inroads which these benefactions began to make upon estates held in chief of the king were a menace to royal power. In order to provide a regular restraint upon

the growth of ecclesiastical property, the statute of mortmain was passed in 1279. As a consequence of this measure, any man who wished to alienate land or churches to a religious corporation, was required to apply for royal letters patent. If it were found by inquisition that the property could be alienated without prejudice to the king or the lord from whom the fee was immediately held, the licence was granted; and, if a church formed part of the property, the religious corporation was allowed to appropriate it by the grant of a further licence, the ordination of a vicarage being left to the decree of the bishop. It need hardly be said that a very large number of churches remained all through the middle ages in the hands of private patrons, and that by no means all churches granted to monasteries were appropriated by them. Of the arrangements for these unappropriated rectories more will be said later. The connexion of the parish churches with the monasteries is of great importance, however, for our present purpose.

§ 8. As so many churches belonged to monasteries, it is constantly assumed that the monasteries, especially during Norman times, provided parish churches at their own expense. Thus the splendid series of churches in south Lincolnshire, on the road from Sutton Bridge to Spalding, is said, without historical foundation, to have been produced by

rivalry in church-building between Croyland abbey and other monasteries. It is true that, as at Spalding in 1284, the religious house would probably contribute a certain amount to the building or rebuilding of an appropriated church, but that amount would be limited, and the parishioners would be left to provide the rest according to their means. When vicarages were ordained, the repair of the chancel, the rector's peculiar property, was usually left to the monastery as rector; but we often find that a special stipulation was made by which part of the repairs even of this portion of the church devolved upon the vicar, and that sometimes his stipend was so arranged as to free the monastery of this obligation altogether. A monastery naturally regarded the fruits of a church as an addition to its own income. The most that could be expected of it would be that it would employ a reasonable part of the profits in keeping the fabric in order. If the monastery owned the manor as well as the advowson, it probably, and here and there unmistakably, did more for the fabric of the parish church. But these fabrics were in most cases existing when the monasteries took seisin of the advowsons of the churches in question. When appropriation followed, the enrichment of the monastery, not the enlargement of the building, was the end in view; and the plea made by the monastery in dealing with the bishop over appropriations, was invariably one

of poverty. When a church, then, was rebuilt or enlarged, the money came for the most part from parishioners, the monastery supplying its proportion, not without a view to strict economy.

§ 9. Further, the builders were generally, it may be assumed, local masons. We have seen an indication of this at Branston, where the builder grafted imitative detail in a new style upon his own old-fashioned work. The splendid development of many twelfth century parish churches is no argument against their local origin. Architectural enthusiasm in the middle ages was a possession of the people generally: it was not confined to a limited and privileged body. The large monastery or cathedral churches in every neighbourhood were sources of inspiration to the builders of the parish churches: details were copied, and methods of construction were learned from them, and the structural progress which took place in them had a constant influence upon the architectural improvement of the less important buildings. Here and there, perhaps, a mason, who had taken part in the building of one of the greater churches, would be called into consultation for the design of a parish church; and this, as years went by, would become more common. It should be noted that in the middle ages the builder was not a mere instrument to carry out the designs of an architect. He himself, the master mason of the work, was

the architect. His training lay, not in the draughtsmanship of an architect's office, but in practical working with mallet and chisel. Thus, during at any rate the earlier part of the middle ages, design was in no small degree a matter of instinct. Architecture was a popular, democratic art, in which the instinctive faculties became trained to a high pitch. The individual mason was allowed free play for his talent; and the result was that constant variety of design and detail, that continual movement and progress, those forward steps or that conservative hesitation in the art of different districts, which are the eternal attraction of medieval architecture. One feature of the instinctive faculty of design in the builder was that he did much of his work by eye alone. He must have made some rough measurements for the setting out of his buildings; but he was not always provided with a plan or elevations. Even in our larger churches, his work was sometimes left to his own judgment. The western transept at Lincoln, for example, can hardly have been built with much forethought. Each set of masons employed upon it seems to have been left to its own devices: accurate spacing was entirely neglected, and the connexion between the different parts of the design was evidently a matter of guess-work, which led to curious irregularities in the elevation. In this striking instance, the builders were doubtless hampered by

having to build their new transept round older buildings, which were not taken down until their work was well advanced; and the encumbered site alone may account for some bewilderment.

§ 10. Parish churches in England may be divided, for historical purposes, into four classes. (1) In some monastic churches, as in the Benedictine priory of Selby and the Augustinian priory of Bridlington, the parochial altar was in the nave of the church, west of the rood screen, and was served by a vicar or a curate, who was responsible for the spiritual welfare of the parish. (2) In collegiate churches a similar arrangement existed; but in the majority of such cases the dean or warden of the college was regarded as the parson of the parish, and had the cure of souls. (3) Of parish churches appropriated to monasteries, we have spoken already. (4) There remains the very large number of unappropriated parish churches, in which the rector or parson was directly responsible for the cure of souls. The duties of the rector were regarded in the middle ages with considerable latitude. Nothing was more usual than for a man of good family, or one whose clerkly talents made him a constant attendant on the king or the great officers of state, to obtain a number of benefices which provided him with a necessary income. Such parsons were naturally non-resident: as often as not, they had not proceeded to full orders. The Patent Rolls

are full of grants of benefices to persons engaged in the work of the royal chancery or exchequer; while the papal registers in the Vatican library contain thousands of dispensations by which pluralists were enabled to hold several benefices at a time, to acquire benefices up to a stated value, or to defer their ordination to the priesthood. Popes and bishops alike kept a careful watch on the attempt to obtain additional benefices without licence; but it is quite obvious that little discrimination could be exercised, and that dispensations became matters of form, for which the applicant, backed by a request from the king or some magnate, made a payment in money. Pluralism was further increased by the pope's claim to reserve certain benefices on a vacancy, and provide incumbents to them. This claim, which originally was intended to prevent patrons from keeping benefices vacant and appropriating their fruits, led to the enactment of the statute of provisors in 1351. Papal provisions, though nominally forbidden, were not stopped by this law, but became subject to regulation.

§ 11. To the medieval mind, the habit of a non-resident rector, holding several churches in plurality, was a matter of course, which cannot be judged by the moral standard of our own day. It must be regarded simply as a fact, not as an abuse. The rector was required to see that his churches were properly served, and probably, like his successors

after the Reformation, he paid a curate to do his work in each of his churches. In some cases, like monastic impropriators, he made an arrangement by which a vicar was provided with a fixed stipend; and now and then a vicar was properly instituted by the bishop at his presentation. This was the regular course of procedure in parish churches attached to prebends in cathedral and collegiate churches, which were held for the most part by king's clerks, and often by foreigners appointed by the pope. But it is clear that, where a man held ten or twelve churches at once, they might be served very irregularly. Again, no form of litigation in the middle ages was so common as that between two or more claimants of an advowson. The sub-division of the ownership of a manor might and did constantly lead to a dispute between rival patrons for the presentation to a living. Thus, in the latter half of the thirteenth century, the church of Adlingfleet in Yorkshire became the subject of a long law-suit between two separate patrons, the archbishop of York, and their presentees, which was protracted for nearly thirty years before the royal and papal courts. The candidates, all non-residents, strove to obstruct each other. In the parish itself they made attempts to defend their rights by force, and it is difficult to see how, during this period of strife, the cure of souls could have been adequately served. Churches appropriated to monasteries were more

fortunate; for they, in most instances, had the advantage of a resident vicar, and the appropriation removed disputes as to the patronage.

§ 12. Pluralism and litigation, in themselves, had no noticeable effect on architectural development. But they led to a desire, on the part of the parishioners, for resident clergy with an endowment independent of the caprices of lay patrons. And this led to the establishment of chantry priests at the altars of churches, which had a powerful effect upon the architectural growth of the churches in which they served. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, and from that time to the Reformation, the foundation of chantries in parish churches became a common thing. Zeal for the foundation of monasteries had spent itself. Lay benefactors acquired the habit of alienating land, not to some religious house, but to one or more priests who, as a condition of the gift, should say mass daily at one of the altars of a parish church for the good estate of the giver and other persons named by him, and for their souls after death. These endowments of services were known as chantries, and were intended to continue for ever. Many chantries were founded in cathedral and monastery churches; but, as time went on, the church of the parish in which the benefactor lived was more and more frequently chosen as their site. That this had been always the custom is probable;

but it was a custom which certainly was not universal until the later middle ages. From the time of the enactment of the statute of mortmain, we possess a series of royal licences for the foundation of chantries and gifts of land to chantry priests, which are invaluable in tracing the history of the English parish church. A chantry, however, is a service, not the building in which it is held. It might be founded at the high altar of a church, but more usually was connected with one of the lesser altars. It was natural, however, that a founder would be willing to do something for the repair of the part of the church in which his chantry was held. Repair took the form of enlargement and rebuilding; and while special chantry chapels were sometimes built as excrescences from the main body of the church, the usual building which was done in connexion with a chantry implied the widening or addition of an aisle.

§ 13. A good concrete example of this procedure is the church of Beckingham, five miles east of Newark-on-Trent, a building of various periods, but chiefly of the early part of the thirteenth century. The aisles of the nave are wide, and belong, in their present condition, to the fourteenth century. At the end of each are distinct indications of the former presence of an altar. The parson of Beckingham in the second quarter of the fourteenth century was Thomas Sibthorpe, a man of some substance, and one

of the royal clerks. His benefactions to the church of his native village of Sibthorpe and to Beckingham involved him in some litigation, ample records of which are to be found in the Patent Rolls. In 1332 he obtained a licence to found a chantry in the chapel of St Mary, in the north part of Beckingham church, and by the end of 1347, he built the chapel of St Anne, on the south side of the church. Both the existing chapels agree with one another in date; and we may safely infer that Sibthorpe probably widened, and certainly rebuilt both the aisles between 1332 and 1347. He evidently intended his chapel of St Mary to be of some importance, as the chantry priest was called the warden, and was probably intended to be the head of a small college, such as existed at Sibthorpe. Of a chantry in the chapel of St Anne we know nothing: Sibthorpe endowed two candles to be burned there at certain times. An interesting feature of this fourteenth century rebuilding is that the north and south doorways, both of late twelfth century work, were removed to the new walls.

§ 14. The growth of chantry foundations formed the most remarkable feature of the lay activity of the later middle ages, and is treated in the next chapter with a view to its influence on architectural progress. We may sum up the influence of the historical facts already indicated upon the fabric of the parish church

in the following conclusions: (1) The origin of the parish church was the spiritual need of the private estate. (2) The lord of the manor was the founder and provided the fabric. (3) The work of the fabric was entrusted to local masons. (4) In the division of expense, the rector became responsible for the chancel and the altar from which he received his dues. (5) The parishioners were responsible for the fabric of the nave. (6) In churches appropriated to monasteries, the chancel was the only part of the fabric for which the monastery was responsible, and a part of its responsibility was usually laid upon the vicar. (7) Where the monastery was lord of the manor, it would take its share of the building and up-keep of the church with the other parishioners. We shall see in a later chapter some concrete instances of manorial and monastic influence at work upon the structure of the church.

CHAPTER II

THE CHANTRY CHAPEL IN THE PARISH CHURCH

§ 15. The chantry and the guild chapel had so important an influence on the plan of the parish church, and especially of the larger church, that they deserve further consideration, in company with the anomalies of plan which are their result. Chantries increased in number during the fourteenth century, and, from the period of the Black Death to the Reformation, had an ever growing importance. At Grantham, where it is clear that the enlargement of the church was due to the increase of chantries, three were founded in 1349, two of them at altars inside the church. In 1392 two new chantries were founded, at the altars of Holy Trinity and Corpus Christi, and the maintenance of chantries at the altars of St Mary and St John Baptist was increased by new benefactions. Thus, to large churches, a large staff of priests became attached. Although Grantham was never incorporated as a

collegiate church, the body of clergy which served it seem to have had common services in quire together, and to have been known as the 'college.' The chantry priests of a large church would benefit from incorporation in the ordinary course of things, and it very often happened that they were formed into a regular college, or that provisions were made affecting their common

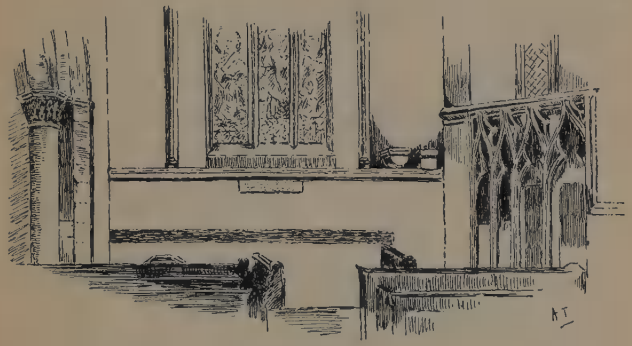


Fig. 1. Hallaton, Leicestershire : chapel in S. aisle.

life. St William's college at York was founded for the chantry priests of the minster in 1461 by archbishop Neville and his brother, the king-maker. In 1482–3 archbishop Rotherham founded his college of Jesus at Rotherham, to which, as a secondary provision of the foundation, the chantry priests already existing in the church were to be attached. Rotherham

recognised that a large body of individual priests, whose duties for the day were finished with their daily mass, would be open to temptation if they were allowed to choose their own lodgings as they liked; and Thomas Kent, whose executors in 1481 founded a 'perpetual commonalty' of the seven chantry priests of St James Garlickhithe in the city of London, expressed his opinion that these chaplains 'conversed among laymen and wandered about, rather than dwelt among clerks, as was decent.' Not infrequently, a benefactor who wished to found a chantry of more than one chaplain, acquired the advowson of the church in which it was to be founded, and secured its appropriation to his chaplains, who held it in perpetuity, and were incorporated as a college. This was the case with the college of Sibthorpe. In 1333 Sir John Heslerton, patron of the church of Lowthorpe in east Yorkshire, founded a college of six priests in the church, whose duties were set forth in detail by archbishop Melton in his ordinance for the new college, which included the appropriation of the church to it. Sir John represented to the archbishop that the fruits of the living would serve for the maintenance of more than one parson, but that there were few ministers there. 'Many persons there,' he said, 'who are attached to the worship of the Holy Trinity and St Mary, and are desirous of daily service in their honour and for the departed, grow lukewarm

because of the frequent absence of anyone to celebrate in the church, when their minister is engaged in the visitation of the sick, or in discharge of the other duties of his office.' Six chantries were founded, with a priest to each, known as the chantries of the Trinity, St Mary, the archbishop, the chapter, the founder, and the patron. The head of the college was known as the rector. He and the six chaplains had a common habitation in the rectory. Daily they were to assemble in the church, with the three clerks attached to the college, one of whom at least was to be a deacon, and chant the canonical services. The chaplains were obliged to wear a common dress of black or nearly dark cloth with black surcoats.

§ 16. The great advantage of colleges of chantry priests was that they ensured a constantly resident ministry in the parish. This, in days when rectors were frequently non-residents or pluralists, whose real business lay in attending on the king in the chancery or exchequer, was a most desirable circumstance. But it is also quite easy to see that, in a parish like Lowthorpe, a small country village between Bridlington and Driffield, if there were too few ministers before the foundation of the college, there probably were too many after. Their duty, as enunciated by the founder, was to celebrate divine service for the departed; and this was a duty which, sacred though it was, left those who were bound by

it a fair margin of leisure. Also, in some churches, the chantry foundations were on a very large scale. The college of Cotterstock in Northants was founded in 1337 for a provost and twelve chaplains. In 1411 the college of Fotheringhay was founded, only two miles away, for a master, twelve chaplains, eight clerks, and thirteen choristers. Of the three chantry colleges in Shropshire, Battlefield was founded at first for a master and seven chaplains, to pray for the dead who fell at the battle of Shrewsbury; Tong was founded in 1410 for a warden and four chaplains; Newport was enlarged from a chantry of two chaplains, founded in 1432, to a college of a warden and four chaplains in 1442. Other colleges which may be cited out of many were Haccombe in Devon, founded in 1335 for an arch-priest and five chaplains; Bunbury in Cheshire, founded in 1386–7 for a master and six chaplains; Clovelly in Devon, founded in 1387–8 for a warden and six chaplains; Pleshy in Essex, founded in 1393–4 for a master or warden, eight chaplains, two clerks, and two choristers; Higham Ferrers in Northants, founded in 1425 for a master or warden, seven chaplains, four clerks, and six choristers; Tattershall in Lincolnshire, founded in 1439 for a master or warden, six chaplains, six secular clerks, and six choristers, with thirteen almspeople; and Middleham in Yorkshire, founded in 1477–8 for a dean, six chaplains, four clerks, six choristers, and one

secular clerk. All these foundations bore a distinct resemblance to the ordinary collegiate bodies, such as those of the cathedrals, or of Wolverhampton, Tamworth, Bridgnorth, or Westbury-on-Trym. But, while the holders of prebends in collegiate churches were not necessarily, and indeed were seldom, resident, the fellows or chaplains of chantry colleges were obliged to be always on the spot. Nor were these chantries of more than one priest founded merely in parish churches. Lords of manors founded chantries on their estates: there was a college of several chantry priests at the Beauchamp castle of Elmley in Worcestershire, for example. Sir Robert Umfraville, who founded in 1429 a chantry of a master and a chaplain in the chapel of his manor house at Farnacres, near Gateshead, strictly bound down the incumbents to their religious duties, forbidding them to carry on any temporal business as bailiffs or estate agents, on the ground that *dum colitur Martha, expellitur Maria.*

§ 17. The foundation of ordinary chantries more than kept pace with the foundation of chantry colleges. Individual benefactors sought to secure their own salvation and that of their relations, by endowing an altar in their parish church. In parishes where services were few, the parishioners often clubbed together for the support of a stipendiary service, paid out of property of which they were feoffees.

The chaplain whose services were thus secured would be of great use to the incumbent of a large parish, especially at seasons when there were many communicants, and many confessions had to be heard. Also, in distant parts of large parishes, separated from the mother church by several miles, or by foul roads and flooded streams in winter, chantry priests were provided by individual or collective benefactions to serve the altars of parochial chapels. In the great parishes of west Yorkshire, Burnsall, Aysgarth, or Grinton, each including a vast tract of dale and fell, parochial chapels, subject to the mother church, had existed from a very early period. Such chapels became more numerous as the middle ages advanced; and the famous chapel of South Skirlaugh, between Hull and Hornsea, so often quoted as a perfect example of late Gothic work, was one of these subordinate foundations. It may also be noted that two of the largest parish churches of the same neighbourhood, St Augustine's at Hedon and Holy Trinity at Hull, were originally chapels to Preston-in-Holderness and Hessle. At Boughton in Northants, owing to a shifting of the population, a chapel in the parish became the parish church. Obviously, if the larger churches were to be properly served, they must depend in no small measure on the goodwill of the parishioners.

§ 18. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries

the parishioners came forward with benefactions as they never had done before. The rich wool stapler of Grantham, Newark, or Boston, returned thanks for his wealth by founding a chantry in his church or one of its chapels. With the rise of the commercial class, the churches of East Anglia were rebuilt and transformed. Wealthy trade guilds at York, Boston, Shrewsbury, or Coventry, maintained their own chaplains in the various parish churches. Religious guilds or fraternities, composed both of men and women, obtained royal licence for incorporation, and established their chantries. Such was the Palmers' guild at Ludlow, which received its first royal charter in 1284, and maintained a large body of chantry priests, incorporated as a college, in the parish church. These religious guilds existed for the purpose of mutual assistance and works of charity. The guilds of St Mary and Corpus Christi in Cambridge united together in one corporation, and founded Corpus Christi college in 1352. In 1392 the guild of St Mary at Stamford had licence to devote land to the maintenance of certain chantry priests in St Mary's at the Bridge. In the same year, two guilds at Coventry were united under the name of the guild of the Holy Trinity, St Mary, and St John the Baptist, and founded a college of chaplains in St John's chapel at Bablake. Still in 1392, the guild of the Holy Cross at Birmingham was founded, with its chaplains in St Martin's; and the

guilds of St Mary and of Jesus Christ and the Holy Cross in the parish church of Chesterfield. To 1393 belongs the foundation of the guild of the Holy Trinity at Spalding, with a chaplain at the Trinity altar in the parish church. In the reign of Henry IV the refounded guild of St Cross and St John the Baptist at Stratford-on-Avon had licence to find two or more chaplains in their parish church (1403); the guild of St Thomas of Canterbury, with one or two chaplains, was founded at Long Sutton in Lincolnshire (1405). Under Henry VI may be mentioned the guild of St Mary at Louth, with more than one chaplain, founded in 1446–7; the licence to the guild of the Holy Trinity at Nottingham, in the same year, to maintain two chaplains in St Mary's church; the guild of St Mary of Crediton, with a chaplain at the altar of St Peter, founded in 1448; the guilds of the Holy Trinity, with two chaplains, at Chipping Norton, and, with one or more chaplains, at Louth (1450); and the guild of St Mary, with two chaplains, at Chipping Sodbury in Gloucestershire (1452). In 1460–1, the twelve chaplains, supported by seven guilds, in All Saints, Northampton, were formed into a college. In the time of Edward IV the trade guilds became more active in establishing chantries; but the foundation of religious guilds went on with unabated zeal. A number were founded in the small market-towns of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire,

and Hertfordshire, with aid in more than one instance from the diocesan, Thomas Rotherham, then bishop of Lincoln—the fraternity of the Body of Jesus Christ at Leighton Buzzard (1473), the guilds of the Holy Trinity at Luton (1474) and Biggleswade (1474–5), a guild at Hitchin (1475), and the guild of St Mary and St Thomas the Martyr at Stony Stratford (1476). In 1480 was founded a guild at Thaxted in Essex, and in 1483–4 the fraternity of the Holy Cross at Abingdon.

§ 19. The names of most of these guilds, which were joined by royal and noble personages, are connected with churches of great beauty and importance, which owe their final perfection in no small degree to the benefactions of the brethren and sisters of the guilds. The chapel of Bablake, St John Baptist's church at Coventry, was a result of the incorporation of the guilds in 1392. The two guilds at Louth and Chesterfield left their mark on the churches in which they worshipped. The chancel, the aisles of the nave, the great porches, the west tower and spire, at Thaxted, belong to the epoch, if they are not altogether the direct result, of the foundation of the guild. Chantry chapels and guild chapels may exert their influence on the plan of the fabric, simply by providing it with a complete set of aisles. Of this type of plan, we already have seen an example at Beckingham. But these chapels often cause anomalies which are difficult to

classify, and lead to some confusion of plan; and some instances of this character must now be given. In the first place, the chantry chapel is not confined to any definite part of the plan. In our cathedrals it is frequently an excrescence from an outer wall of the church, like the bishops' tomb chapels at Lincoln or Hereford, or it is a rectangular structure of stone, with elaborately traceried windows, cresting, and canopy work, like prince Arthur's chapel at Worcester, or the episcopal tombs at Winchester, set up within an arch of the nave or quire. Of these types we have examples in our parish churches: the first is illustrated, on a large scale, by Hall's chapel at Grantham; on a fair scale, by the chapels at Long Melford and Berkeley; and, on a rather smaller scale, by the chapels, now destroyed, of two masters of Peterhouse, on either side of Little St Mary's church at Cambridge. All these have small doorways and arches for table tombs between the church and the chapel. The chapel east of the south porch at Sherburn-in-Elmet in Yorkshire, has a tomb arch opening into the south aisle; but the entrance is in the east wall of the porch. Many examples of the second type must have existed in the larger churches of England: at Ludlow, for example, there were chantry chapels in the eastern arch of the south arcade, and in the two western arches of both arcades. We read of Sir John Pilkington's chantry, founded in 1475 at the altar of

St Mary in the 'south arch' of the parish church at Wakefield: in 1478 the chantry of Roger Nowell was founded at the altar of St Peter in the 'north arch.' There are stone chantry chapels in the north and south arches of the chancel at Newark—the chantry chapel of Thomas Meyring (1500) on the north, and that of Robert Markham (1505) on the south. These chapels recall prior King's chapel at Bath abbey, the Warre chapel at Boxgrove priory, and other small independent structures, like some of the tomb chapels which form a ring round the apse at Tewkesbury. Most of these chapels beneath arches were no doubt covered, like prior Leishman's tomb at Hexham, with wooden canopies, which have now disappeared. At Burford in Oxfordshire, however, there is, in the east arch of the north arcade, a small chapel with a wooden tester and upright posts: the sides are panelled up to a certain height. The whole structure has been well restored and is still used.

§ 20. Some small chantry chapels form transeptal projections in unusual parts of the building: thus, at Sherburn-in-Elmet, St Botolph's, Cambridge, and Kewstoke, Somerset, such chapels project from the south wall of the nave next the porch. Indeed, the variety in the position of chantry chapels often invests the churches of the west of England with a charm which is not always possessed by more regular

buildings. Churches like Beverstone in Gloucestershire, Croscombe in Somerset, and Sherston Magna in Wiltshire, are full of little surprises for anyone to whom variations in plan appeal. Perhaps the most attractive surprise of this kind is at Long Melford in Suffolk. On the south side of the chancel, opening out of the Martin chapel, is a vestry, which communicates with another building at right angles to it, behind the east wall of the chancel. From this building there is a doorway into the lady chapel, which thus stands detached from the body of the church. The chapel is a nearly square building, with three external gables: internally, there is a central square space, entirely surrounded by an aisle or ambulatory. At Boston there is a chantry chapel, forming a short extra aisle, west of the south porch; while at Witney, there is one west of the north porch. Sometimes, the whole of an aisle of the nave, east of the main entrance of the church, was screened off as a chantry chapel. There are instances of this at Croft in Yorkshire, Hungerton in Leicestershire, and Stratton Strawless in Norfolk. There are instances, again, in which, when a chantry chapel was placed at the end of an aisle, its separate character from the rest of the aisle was structurally defined. In Shropshire, at Alveley, Cleobury Mortimer, Stottesdon, and one or two other places, one or more chantry chapels have been formed by widening the eastern part of the aisles in which the altars were placed.

§ 21. Where chantry colleges have existed, the fact is by no means always obvious in the plan of the church. It is sometimes disclosed by the presence of stall-work of unusual richness in the chancel, as at Higham Ferrers; and sometimes, as in the same place, the altar in the main chancel may have been reserved for the services of the college, while another altar was provided for the ordinary parochial services. But it must be borne in mind that a chantry college was not a monastery. The church appropriated to the college was a parish church. Although a chaplain might be specially deputed to look after parochial services, the master, rector, warden, provost, arch-priest, or whatever his title might be, was in the position of a resident incumbent. Many splendid churches, now shorn of their chancels, recall the fact that the naves of monastic churches were frequently used for the services of the parish. This distinction doubtless extended to many chantry colleges, Arundel and Fotheringhay, for example. But the services of the college were not cut off, like the services of the monastery, from the outer world. The college of Lowthorpe was founded specifically for the benefit of devout parishioners who, before its foundation, could not get all the masses they wanted. The result is that the plan of the chantry church, as it may be called, differed little from that of the ordinary parish church. Sibthorpe and Cotterstock

are normal churches, with fine chancels: the altars at which each of the three chaplains of Chaddesden, or the four of St Michael Penkivel, said his daily mass, are not confined to one part of the church, but are distributed throughout it. Colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, which were originally colleges of clergy, were practically identical with chantry colleges, with the exception that their members were associated mainly for purposes of study and teaching. To many of them parish churches were appropriated, in which they held their services, and maintained their own parochial chaplain. St Michael's at Cambridge, appropriated to Michaelhouse, was rebuilt in the early part of the fourteenth century. It has been little altered, and the division into collegiate quire and parochial nave is clearly marked. There was a similar division in Little St Mary's, belonging to Peterhouse. In the fourteenth century the college began to rebuild the church on a large scale. The chancel was nearly completed, when the Black Death put a stop to the work. Later, an extra western bay was added to the chancel; and the aisleless church thus formed was divided by a screen into a collegiate and a parochial half. In 1446 Clare hall and Trinity hall added aisles to the chancel of St Edward's: these aisles were wider than the aisles of the nave, and also overlapped the nave by one bay. When Jesus college entered into possession of the nunnery of St Radegund, the priory church was shorn

of the western end of the nave and of all its aisles. The college reserved the quire for its own services, while the parishioners of the old peculiar of the priory used the nave and transepts. The ante-chapel of Merton college chapel at Oxford was used till quite lately as the parish church of St John Baptist.

§ 22. No better instance of the complicating influence of chantry chapels on the plan of a parish church could be given than the church of St John Baptist at Cirencester. The oldest part of the present building is the chancel with its south chapel, which contain twelfth and early thirteenth century work, but are in the main the fruit of a later thirteenth century reconstruction. The north chapel, known as St Katharine's chapel, is a rather narrow aisle, communicating with the chancel by fourteenth century arches. North of this, again, there may have been a lady chapel on part of the site of the present one. Towards the middle of the fifteenth century, the aisles of the nave were much widened, the width taken for the new north aisle being about twice the width of St Katharine's chapel, and the new south aisle being rather wider than the south chapel of the chancel. The Trinity chapel was formed by adding to the nave an extra north aisle, about half as long as the adjacent aisle, from which it is divided by a stone screen. There had been an earlier altar of the Trinity in the church; for the licence granted to Robert Playn and others in

1382 to found a chantry of two chaplains in Cirencester church placed one at the altar of the Trinity, and the other at the altar of St Mary. In 1392 another

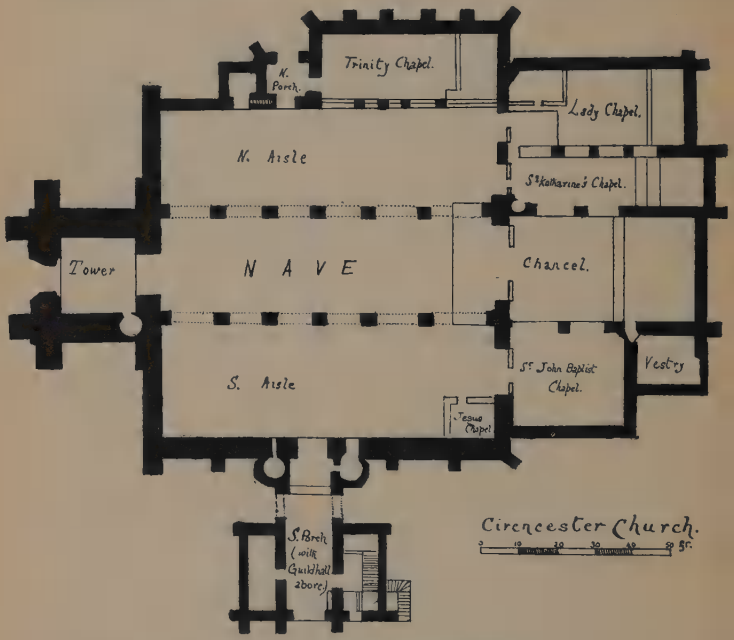


Fig. 2. Plan of Cirencester Church.

chantry was founded in the lady chapel. But, in its present state, the lady chapel seems to belong to the

later part of the fifteenth century, when it was probably much broadened, so as to overlap the east wall of the Trinity chapel. Both it and St Katharine's chapel open into the north aisle through four-centred arches: they open into one another by two arches pierced in the intermediate wall. Between these arches has been left a thin piece of wall, in which rectangular slits, commanding the altar of the lady chapel, have been cut. The plan thus includes two chapels north of the chancel, and another north of the nave, as well as the south chapel of the chancel. The rebuilding of the nave, with its splendid south porch, its smaller north porch, and its western tower, was not completed until early in the sixteenth century. The Jesus chapel was enclosed within screens at the south-east corner of the south aisle; and the roof of St Katharine's chapel was heightened, and provided with fan vaulting.

§ 23. The tendency of the chantry chapels at Cirencester is to group themselves at the east end of the church, the Trinity chapel forming an excrescence at the end of the north aisle which is nearest the chancel. At Chesterfield the high altar, below the great east window, was flanked by the guild chapel of our Lady on the south, and the chapel of St Katharine on the north. The guild chapel of the Holy Cross was east of the north transept: an apsidal chapel east of the south transept contained the altar of St George; while there were two chantry altars

against the screens in the arches of the south transept. The four chantry chapels added to Scarborough church towards the end of the fourteenth century were built in a row at right angles to the south aisle, each with its own separate gable and pointed barrel vault. The chapel of St Nicholas had been added to the church somewhat earlier, by the building of an extra north aisle; a chantry was founded at St Nicholas' altar in 1390. We also meet at Scarborough, Great Yarmouth, and other places, with charnel chapels. That at Scarborough, dedicated to St Mary Magdalene, was probably a separate building in the graveyard. Such external chapels were often built, although few remain to-day. Henry of Newark, archbishop of York 1298–9, founded about 1292, while he was dean of York, a chapel of St Katharine and St Martha in the churchyard of Newark. Some twenty years later, when the enlargement of the aisles of Newark church was contemplated, archbishop Grenefeld licensed the destruction of the chapel. Its materials were used for the rebuilding of the south aisle, and the chantry was probably transferred to an altar in the new building. There was probably a charnel chapel at Grantham, to the south-west of the church.

§ 24. But the most interesting case of an external chapel is the Sylvester chapel at Burford, which now forms a long arm stretching to the south-west of the

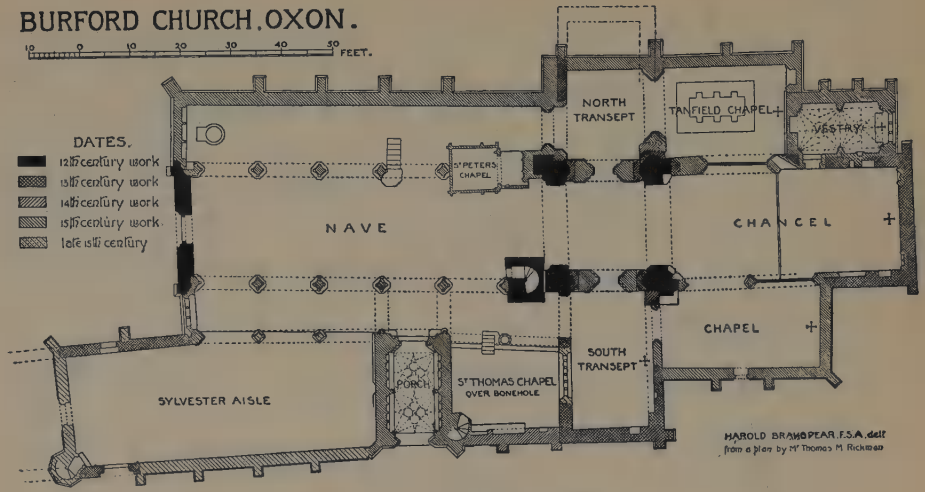


Fig. 3. Plan of Burford Church.

main fabric. The church and chapel were originally separate. The church was, to begin with, an aisleless twelfth century structure, with a tower between nave and chancel. In the thirteenth century the chancel was produced to its present length, the north and south walls of the tower were pierced with arches, and transeptal chapels were added. A narrow south aisle was also added to the nave. About the same time a long aisleless chapel was built in the churchyard, some yards to the south-west of the church. In the fourteenth century a chapel was constructed, with a bone-crypt beneath it, west of the south transept, and was connected with the south aisle. There seems to have been no north aisle to the nave. East of the transepts were small chapels. The fifteenth century saw a great transformation. A sacristy was built north of the altar. Aisles and a south porch of great beauty were built in harmony with a new nave arcade. The outer chapel, the axis of which was not parallel to that of the nave, was prolonged eastward to meet the south porch, and connected by an arcade with the south aisle. It was shortened at the west end, but still projects two bays beyond the main body of the church. The east chapel of the south transept was now taken away, and a south chancel chapel built, the east wall of which interfered with the thirteenth century sedilia of the chancel. The south wall of the chancel, opposite the sacristy, was allowed to stand

clear of the new chapel. On the opposite side of the church, the north transept was shortened, until it was little longer than the breadth of the north aisle: its north wall was then continued eastwards and was returned to join the west wall of the sacristy. The north chapel of the chancel was thus formed. The whole progress of the plan is from a simple form of aisleless church to an aisled rectangle with central tower and spire; but the process is irregular, and the absorption of the outer chapel is an almost unique step. It will be noticed that the south aisle is entirely covered by a triple arrangement of buildings—first, St Thomas' chapel next the south transept, then the south porch, and finally the Sylvester chapel, which gives additional length to the church from this point of view.

§ 25. Other examples of churches in the wealthy market towns of the west of England might be given, in which, as at Frome, chantry chapels grafted themselves upon the plan, with immense advantage to the picturesque effect. But there were few churches on which the foundation of chantries, and especially of chantries maintained by religious guilds, had such influence as on the great churches of Coventry—St Michael's, Holy Trinity, and St John's. Licences for the foundations of chantries in St Michael's bear date 1323 (two chaplains), 1344 (one chaplain in the chapel of St Lawrence, augmented 1383, 1390), 1388

(one chaplain at the altar of All Saints), 1411–2 (one chaplain at the altar of St Katharine), and 1412 (two chaplains at the newly made altars of the Holy Trinity and St Mary). In addition to these altars and the high altar there were altars of Jesus, St John, St Anne, St Thomas, and St Andrew. The chantries at these various altars became in time attached to the

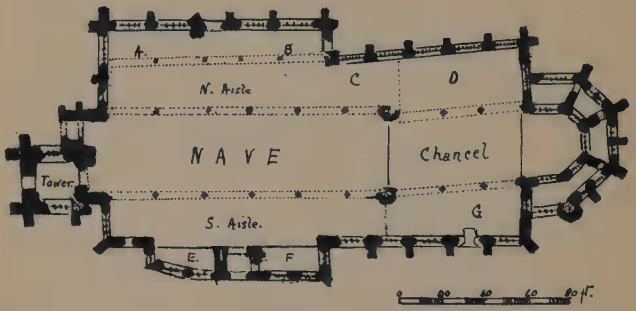


Fig. 4. Plan of St Michael's, Coventry. A. St Andrew's Chapel. B. Girdlers' Chapel. C. St Lawrence's Chapel. D. Drapers' Chapel. E. Dyers' Chapel. F. Cappers' Chapel. G. Mercers' Chapel.

various trade guilds of the town, and the church, greatly enlarged and extended in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, contained several chapels, known by the names of the guilds. Some details of the rebuilding have been touched upon already. The plan is curious; for the chancel ends in a semi-

octagonal apse—a feature which also occurs in the late Gothic chancels of Westbury-on-Trym and Wrexham—surrounded by a row of vestries on a lower level. On the north of the chancel is the lady chapel, the altar of which was new in 1412–3, known later as the drapers' chapel. The south chapel of the chancel was the mercers' chapel, which probably contained the Trinity altar. The eastern part of the north aisle

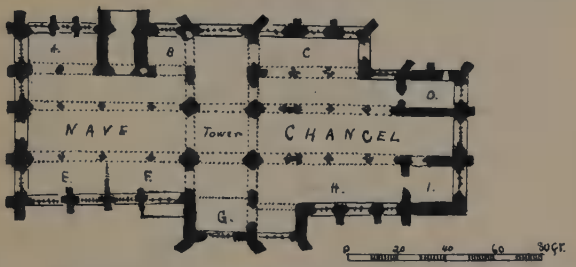


Fig. 5. Plan of Holy Trinity Church, Coventry. A. Archdeacon's Court. B. St Thomas' Chapel. C. Marler's Chapel. D. Lady Chapel. E. Tanners' Chapel. F. Jesus Chapel. G. Corpus Christi Chapel. H. Butchers' Chapel. I. Holy Trinity Chapel.

was occupied by St Lawrence's chapel. The outer north aisle was divided into two parts: east of the doorway was All Saints' or the girdlers' chapel, while west of it was St Andrew's or the smiths' chapel. Two further chapels, St Thomas' or the cappers' chapel, and the dyers' chapel, formed excrescences to east and west of the south porch. The beautiful

cruciform church of the Holy Trinity became flanked in process of time by similar chapels. In the later part of the thirteenth century the north porch was joined to the transept by St Thomas' chapel. At a later date a chapel, afterwards the consistory court, was built from the west wall of the north porch as far as the west wall of the north aisle. Much later, in the sixteenth century, Marler's or the mercers' chapel was continued from the east wall of the north transept along the north aisle of the quire, the north transept being thus practically absorbed in an outer north aisle. The lady chapel was at the end of the north aisle of the chancel, north of the altar: opposite it, on the south, was the Trinity chapel. The south aisle of the chancel was the butchers' chapel: in the south transept was the Corpus Christi chapel, now destroyed; while at the west end of the south aisle of the nave was the tanners' chapel.

§ 26. Thus, by the gradual addition of chapel after chapel, the plan of these magnificent churches, some of the finest productions of English art, grew until, as at Burford or Holy Trinity, Coventry, it lost all likeness to its original state, and seems at first sight to be a collection of buildings heaped together without much method. It would be interesting to trace the growth of churches like St Mary Redcliffe or Ludlow, as we have traced that of Cirencester and Burford. In these cases, it is impossible to give too

much emphasis to the part played by lay benefactors in the development of the fabric. Cirencester, Burford, and the Coventry churches, were appropriated to monasteries: St Mary Redcliffe was merely a chapel of Bedminster, appropriated, like Grantham, to a stall in Salisbury cathedral. At Cirencester and Coventry the churches were close to the religious houses to which they belonged. But the growth of the churches was the result of lay devotion: the founders of chantries of whom we hear, like the famous William Canynge at St Mary Redcliffe, were men who had made money in business. The part of the monasteries in church-building was never, so far as parish churches were concerned, very active. As the middle ages went on, their connexion with the fabrics became still slighter; and their interest in the church, apart from the profits which they received from it, and from an occasional litigation about the advowson, was probably confined to the periodical presentation of a vicar. The highest state of development which the parish church attained, in such buildings as have just been described, or in the great churches of Norfolk and Somerset, was the consequence of a long series of beautifications and improvements, in which at first, no doubt, the lay lords of manors took the leading part, but afterwards were joined by wealthy parishioners, who could find no more fitting employment for their wealth than the enlargement

and decoration of the house of God. And it should not be forgotten that not merely the rich, but the poor, shared in this work of benefaction. In some places, at Oswestry, for example, chantry priests were supported by the devotion of servants or husbandmen, each of whom paid his yearly share of the endowment. Here and there in East Anglia, inscriptions remaining on beautiful pieces of church furniture, bear witness to the generosity of members of the parish in humble positions. The churches of London, Bristol, York, and Norwich, and of countless towns and villages, are memorials of the brightest aspect of medieval religion —the spontaneous devotion which it excited, for motives often mingled with superstition, but never selfish or unworthy, in the most hard-headed and least emotional section, then as now, of English society.

CHAPTER III

THE TOWER, THE PORCH, AND THE CHANCEL

§ 27. In another volume of this series, the development of the ground plan of the parish church has been treated with some detail. The importance of the central tower in connexion with the transeptal or cruciform plan has there been explained; and it has been seen that English builders generally preferred a tower at the west end of the nave. In the present chapter, something will be said of the development and use of the western tower, and of the closely related subject of the entrances to the church. The nave and its aisles demand, in this space, little more attention than can be given to them in the discussion of the ground plan and in what has been said already with regard to chantry chapels; and of their furniture more will be said in the next chapter. But some further consideration of the chancel, the enlargement of which forms so important a part of the history of the medieval plan, is necessary; and some account of its architectural and ritual development is given here, following the description of the tower and porch.



Fig. 6. Norton, Co. Durham: Saxon central tower, with transept.

§ 28. There is evidence that, in certain churches of unquestionably Saxon origin, the western tower was formed, probably at a time considerably subsequent to their foundation, by the heightening of the western porch or main entrance to the church. Brixworth and Monkwearmouth are cases in point. At Brixworth the original western doorway of the porch was blocked up when the stair-turret of the tower was built on that side. At Monkwearmouth the line of the gabled roof of the porch is still visible. Western towers, whether heightened or built from the ground, were certainly not common until, at any rate, the epoch of the Danish wars. No existing church can be assigned positively to that epoch; and those who contend that the church tower then came into existence as a place of defence and refuge from the invaders probably argue from analogies of a later period. The thin walls and undefended ground-floor doorways of Saxon towers forbid us to entertain this theory seriously. But it is certainly the case that these towers, primarily intended as bell-towers, were sometimes planned to afford more accommodation than was necessary for a man whose sole duty was to ring the bell. The ground-floor area of towers like Earl's Barton and Barnack in Northants, and Hough-on-the-Hill in Lincolnshire, which, in their present state, may be assigned tentatively to the later part of the tenth century, takes its place in the history

of the development of the plan; and, just as at Barton-on-Humber, the dimensions of the upper part of such towers were conditioned by the space allotted to the lowest stage. But there are indications that, in cases where the ground floor of the tower was simply the porch of the church, one or more of the upper stages had their special use. A doorway occasionally has been made in the east wall of the tower, above the arch leading into the nave. This may be explained by the fact that such towers were small in area, and that their angles contained no room for staircases. Some access from the interior of the church to their upper stories was necessary, and would be easily provided by a ladder from the ground floor to the doorway on the first floor. The doorway is usually slightly on one side of the centre of the wall, so that the ladder would not interfere with the archway below. But the case is different, when, as at Brixworth, a large circular turret has been built against the west wall of the tower, and from the first floor chamber there is a large triple window-opening looking out into the body of the church. At Deerhurst, there is not only a doorway in the first floor of the tower; but, close by it, near the centre of the wall, there is a small window-opening or squint; while, on the second floor, there is a double window-opening of unusual form, and, on the third floor, another doorway in the centre of the wall, which seems to have opened into a wooden

gallery. More than this, the lower part of the tower is partitioned by a transverse wall into an eastern and western porch and upper chamber. It is therefore indisputable that the tower at Deerhurst was more than a bell-tower. Deerhurst was an important monastery : the size and plan of the church were exceptional ; and the upper floors of the tower may have been used for special purposes in connexion with the monastic services. One may hazard the suggestion that the room on the east side of the first floor was used by the monk whose turn it was to keep night-watch in the church : the spy-hole in the east wall seems to afford ground for this. It has been suggested that the second floor chamber—and, like it, the first floor chamber at Brixworth—was used as an oratory by the lord of the manor and protector of the monastery ; and this is possible, if the importance of the lord of the manor in connexion with early parish churches is taken into account. Almery-like recesses in the wall are found in this chamber at Deerhurst : such recesses, where they are found by themselves, as in the tower of Skipwith in Yorkshire, suggest little and prove nothing, and at Deerhurst no positive reason for their use can be given. In some medieval churches there are traces of altars on the upper floors of towers ; and it is possible that such altars may have existed at Deerhurst and Brixworth, and the windows pierced in the wall

behind them may have been given special decorative treatment. The western stair-turret at Brixworth was probably constructed for the sake of the important first floor chamber. Three other examples of a circular stair-turret projecting from the western face of a tower are found, one in Northamptonshire, two in Lincolnshire ; but in none of these are there any indications of a particular use for the first floor of the tower. The only example of a spiral stair or vice built in an angle of a pre-Conquest tower is at Great Hale in Lincolnshire, and is a rude piece of work. Until the introduction of buttresses, the newel stair in the angle of the tower was uncommon. A ladder from the floor of the tower served for access to the upper stages. In rare instances, as at Kirkburn in the east riding of Yorkshire, a stone stair was built against the inner walls of the tower as far as the level of the first floor. Where angle-staircases have been added to early Norman towers, as at Tansor in Northants or in the central tower at Coln St Denis in Gloucestershire, the abutments have been seriously weakened.

§ 29. In the eleventh century, the western bell-tower, the ground floor of which served as the main porch of the church, became common. The tower of the so-called 'Lincolnshire' type, with its stages separated by off-sets, and its double belfry window openings divided by a 'mid-wall' shaft, is found not

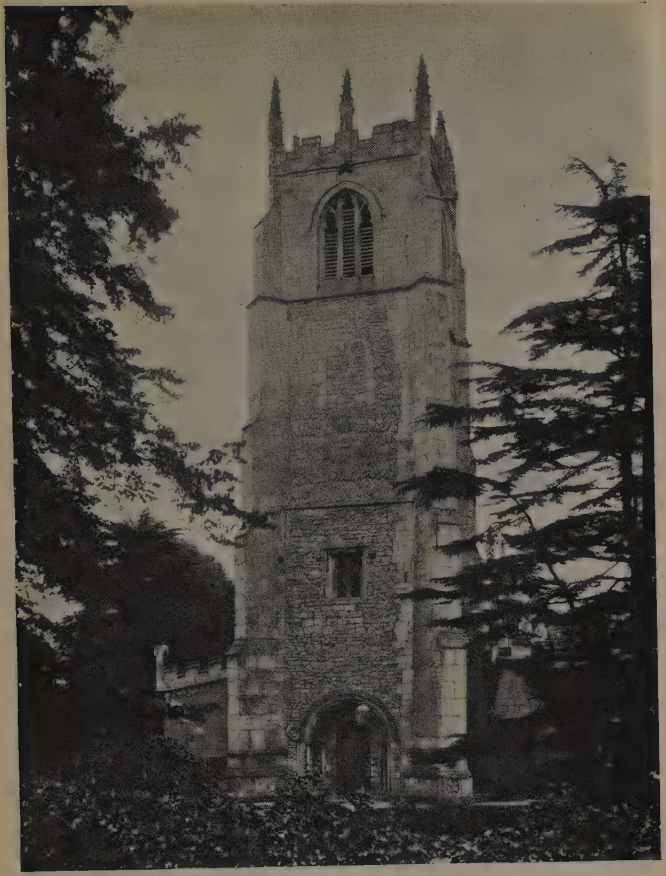


Fig. 7. Carlton-in-Lindrick, Notts.: west tower, of late Saxon type, with later additions.

infrequently in other parts of England, and survived, with some change in proportion and detail, for some time after the Norman Conquest. Some sixty western towers of the ordinary late Saxon type remain in England, exclusive of heightened porches, and of a few round towers in the eastern counties, where the absence of stone suitable for quoins made this shape desirable. It is probable that portions of many more exist beneath later additions. We have seen that in the tower at Branston, built more than a quarter of a century at earliest after the Conquest, the old type was retained—the slender tower, lofty in proportion to its area. The tower of Weaverthorpe in the east riding of Yorkshire, obviously Norman in its details, keeps the old proportions. Many towers, on the contrary, which, at first sight, might be associated with the Saxon group, shew Norman influence in the thickness of their walls and stoutness of their proportions. While the normal thickness of wall in the late Saxon towers of Lincolnshire is about three and a half feet, the thickness at Caistor is increased to nearly six feet. The normal area is from ten to twelve feet square: the area at Caistor is $15\frac{1}{2}$ feet east to west by $17\frac{1}{2}$ north to south. The normal width of the arch between tower and nave is about $5\frac{3}{4}$ feet: at Caistor it is nearly four feet more. At Tugby, between Leicester and Uppingham, there is a remarkable tower, built in a primitive

fashion which shews distinct traces of Saxon kinship, but with proportions and with the introduction of detail which as clearly bear witness to its post-Conquest date. Hooton Pagnell, near Doncaster, has a large western tower which follows the Saxon tradition of the simple rubble tower with small stone quoins and without buttresses; but the character of the arch leading into the nave is distinctly Norman, and the tower is not merely of unusually large area, but is the full breadth of the spacious nave beyond it. While the western tower increases in area, it does not at first acquire buttresses at the angles: these, in their flat pilaster-like form, begin to appear in the course of the twelfth century.

§ 30. The magnificent architectural development of the tower and spire, in which, as in perhaps no other part of the church, the individual characteristics of local schools of masoncraft can be traced, becomes noticeable in the thirteenth century, at a time when the use of the ground floor of the tower as the principal porch of the church had been discontinued. In the fen country round Wisbech and Spalding, a series of thirteenth century towers, covering the period from 1200 to 1280, bears witness to the work of a school of tower builders, hardly less distinguished than the great Somerset masons of later days, which probably derived its inspiration from the arcaded western tower of Ely cathedral. Elm, Leverington,

Walsoken, West Walton, Tilney All Saints, Long Sutton, Gedney, and Whaplode, are the principal evidence of their work. Not all these towers are western, and four of the number, including Gedney, the belfry stage of which belongs to a later date, are without the spires which their builders doubtless intended; but all are instances of the treatment of the bell-tower as an independent architectural composition, quite irrespective of its part in the plan of the church. In the twelfth century, however, when the side doorway was superseding the tower porch, the western tower was by no means so handsome or invariable a feature as it became in later days. Many smaller churches were content with a bell-cot over the western gable. There are several excellent examples of stone bell-cots in Rutland. In Essex and other districts where good building timber was easily procured, it is not uncommon to find square towers of timber, with conical caps or even spires, above the western gable, often supported on an elaborate framework within the west end of the church. A few timber towers, like Margaretting in Essex, are built up against the old west end of the church.

§ 31. There can be no doubt that, in the earlier part of the middle ages, while the high pitched roof prevailed in the main body of the building, the spire was considered the proper termination of a tower.

Its chief development naturally took place in districts where good roofing stone was plentiful; and the finest English spires, with a few exceptions, are to be found in south Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, and Rutland. In less favoured districts, timber spires, covered with lead or shingles, were placed upon towers. Many of these remain in Surrey and Sussex. The spire may be regarded as the natural development of the conical roofs with which the towers of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries were usually crowned—an invaluable, if exceptional, example of which remains at Sompting, near Worthing. These must generally have been of wood with leaden coverings. The earliest general development of the stone spire is probably to be traced to south Lincolnshire, where the low broach spires of Sleaford, Rauceby, Frampton, and a few other churches, appear to belong to the last years of the twelfth, or earliest years of the thirteenth century. The spire continued to be fashionable in this and the neighbouring districts, long after it had become unusual in other parts of England. Grantham spire exercised an enduring influence upon its neighbourhood. It was the model upon which the builders of the spire of Oakham endeavoured to improve, with less striving after height and more coherence of design. From Oakham was closely derived the tower of Exton in Rutland, where the builders raised their

spire upon an octagonal base. The octagon at Exton was probably the parent of those octagons which, rising on the summit of towers, reach their climax in the lantern at Boston, and in the octagonal frame which surrounds the lower part of the spire at Patrington. Other details at Exton bore fruit in the spires of Oundle and Kettering. At the very end of the middle ages, the feeling for the spire in Lincolnshire was still so strong that the tower of Louth was designed for a spire in the middle of the fifteenth century, and the spire itself was brought to completion in 1515.

§ 32. While, in the districts to which allusion has just been made, towers were designed, as a rule, with a view to the spires which were to cover them, the tower, in other parts of England, was designed simply as a tower, and the spire was regarded merely as a roof for it. In the chalk country north of the Thames, towers are often found crowned by small timber spirelets with a leaden covering, which are merely insignificant additions. Towards the middle of the fourteenth century, an important development in the elevation of the main fabric led to a general disuse of the spire, especially in districts where stone spires had formed no part of architectural design. Clerestories with broad windows were built above the arcades of the nave. With this increase of height the old high pitched roofs were abandoned



Fig. 8. Tickhill, Yorkshire : general view from S.E., showing clerestory, western tower and projecting eastern chapel.

in favour of roofs of a flatter pitch. Very often, this was due to the rotting of the old roof-timber at the ends next the wall-plates. These ends were sawn off, and the roof re-laid at a lower pitch. At the same time, the clerestory dwarfed the western tower. At Oadby, near Leicester, where there is a beautiful tower and spire, designed in perfect harmony with a fourteenth century nave, the fifteenth century clerestory actually raises the height of the nave to that of the tower, with incongruous effect. During the fifteenth century, therefore, it is common to find that towers were rebuilt, or an upper story was added to them, in proportion to the increase of height in the nave. Thus, at Immingham in north Lincolnshire, the clerestory and upper part of the tower are of one date, and were built as part of one connected work. The roof of the clerestory being, in most cases, nearly flat, the roof of the tower followed suit; and although, where traditions of spire design had a hardy existence, spires were still built, towers without spires, surmounted by parapets like the parapets which hid the roof of the clerestories, became the order of the day. In certain parts of England, and especially in Somerset, where the art of designing towers was pursued with extraordinary success, towers were rebuilt from the ground. But the proportion of towers, with or without spires, which have been heightened to meet the requirements of a

clerestory, is probably in excess of the proportion of towers entirely rebuilt. In the case of heightened towers, the pitch of the older roof of the nave can generally be made out by the retention of its housing slot or weather course in the east wall of the tower. At Gedney, in south Lincolnshire, where the lower part of the tower is of the thirteenth century, the line of the contemporary roof may be traced above the tower arch. Above this is another line, marking the pitch of a new roof, made when the arcades were rebuilt in the fourteenth century. The clerestory and the upper story of the tower belong to the fifteenth century. In many instances, however, the flattening of the roof has followed the rebuilding of the tower; and in these the old weather course will be found on the east face of the tower, above the present roof, as in the south aisle at St Mary's, Leicester. Here the roof was probably flattened in the fifteenth century, when the tower and spire were completed.

§ 33. West doorways are frequently found in towers; and often, as at Grantham and Newark, they are of some importance in the design. They are a general feature of the larger towers, although sometimes, as at St Michael's, Coventry, where the nave has a west porch north of the tower, they are insignificant, and were probably intended to be little more than a convenient entrance for building

materials. In Northamptonshire, some of the towers of the churches of the Nene valley have doorways covered by shallow porches. The beautiful porch at Higham Ferrers and that at Raunds are the earliest: later porches occur at Oundle, Rushden, and Keyston, the last place being just across the border of Huntingdonshire. These western doorways were sometimes used as principal entrances to the church, and were provided with holy-water stoups. But habitually they were kept closed, and used only on special occasions for ritual purposes, as in the Palm Sunday procession, when the clergy and choir entered the church by the west door. Such entrances would be a natural feature of large churches, like Kettering, and are found in the west walls of churches like Stratford-on-Avon, St Mary Redcliffe's at Bristol, or Ketton in Rutland, where the tower is central or in a situation not at the west end of the nave. Where the west doorway is covered by a projecting porch, as mentioned above, the design possibly recalls the western porches or Galilees, found in some of our larger churches, and on an imposing scale, in certain districts of France. The word Galilee arises from the fact that the west porch was the last stage in the Sunday procession, and the celebrant, entering it first, symbolised our Lord preceding His disciples into Galilee after the Resurrection, of which Sunday was the festival. A regular western building of the

Galilee type is a somewhat rare feature in an English parish church; but there is one at Melton Mowbray, and at Snettisham in Norfolk there is an open porch, projecting beyond the west wall of the church. In both cases the church has a central tower. At King's Sutton in Northamptonshire, there is a vaulted porch in front of the western tower.

§ 34. It has been said that there are churches of the twelfth century in which the tower was omitted, and a bell-cot above the western gable took its place. Quenington in Gloucestershire, and Barton-le-Street in the north riding of Yorkshire, are good examples. In both cases, a north as well as a south doorway were provided to the aisleless nave, although, at Barton-le-Street, this circumstance has been obscured by a modern restoration. In neither case was there a western door; and in both the north doorway, which stands on the side nearest the village, has probably been always the main entrance. The reason of the two doorways may have been the exigencies of processions, in which the litany was sung, and the altars of the church sprinkled with holy water. Such processions took place, at any rate in the greater churches, every Sunday, and in monastic churches were partly external, to include the buildings of the cloister. In smaller churches, however, external processions would be of rare occurrence, and two doorways would hardly be provided for this

reason alone. As a rule, the ordinary entrance would lie on the side of the church nearest the approach from the village, which was generally on the south. But this is not invariable; and the favourite entrance, even where a village lay to the north of the church, was on the south side. There are sometimes signs that one of the doorways may have been appropriated traditionally to the use of the tenants of one of the manors in a parish, or to the parishioners of a chapelry who were bound to attend the mother church on certain feasts in the year. Thus at Barton-le-Street, the south doorway, lying on the side of the church towards the hamlet of Coneysthorpe, is called the Coneysthorpe doorway. At Easingwold, in Yorkshire, the north doorway is called the Raskelf door, and was doubtless used by the inhabitants of the chapelry of Raskelf on these special occasions. At Hungerton, near Leicester, the tenants of each of the four manors in the parish still occupy their own quarter of the nave; and at Churchdown, near Gloucester, the names of the various chapelries of the medieval parish are still applied to divisions of the churchyard. In cases like this, the doorway nearest to the part of the church appropriated to one or more of these separate bodies of parishioners would naturally be used as well as the main doorway.

§ 35. In its simplest form, the porch is simply a protection to the doorway which it covers. The

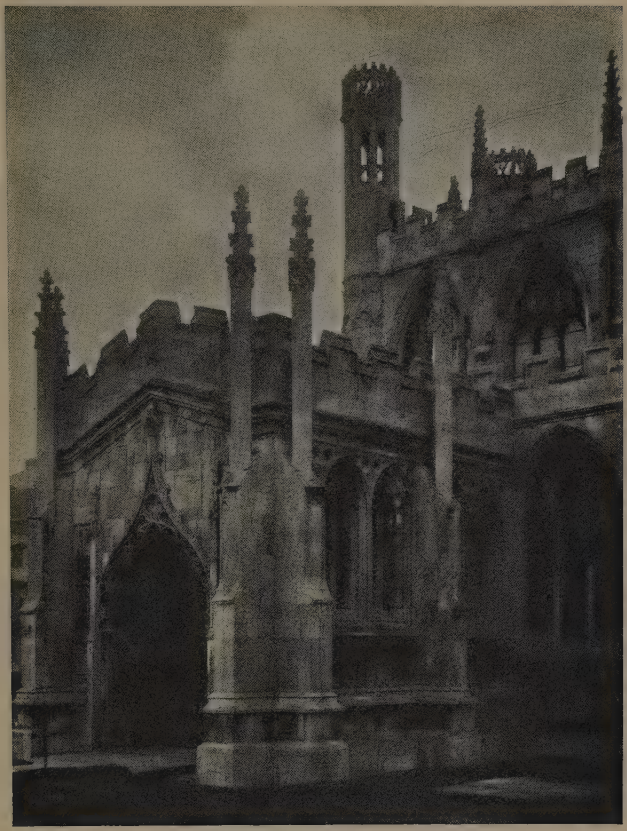


Fig. 9. St Mary's, Beverley: south porch.

timber porches, often beautiful works of art, which are common in Essex and other timber-growing parts of England and Wales, can hardly have served any very practical use, although, like stone porches, they have side-benches, on which worshippers could rest. But, from the days when the south porch of Canterbury cathedral was resorted to by litigants from every part of the kingdom, the church porch was a common place for the transaction of much secular business. Hence, no doubt, it became a permanent stone structure, usually roofed with wood, but sometimes vaulted, as at Barnack, or covered, as in some of the churches round Doncaster, by a high pitched roof of stone slabs. In many later medieval churches, the size of the porch increased, and it was vaulted with elaborate ribbed ceilings, or, as at Lavenham in Suffolk, with fan vaulting. There may sometimes have been, as there was at Canterbury and possibly at Bradford on Avon, an altar in the porch. At South Pool in Devon, the bench which runs along the east wall is raised in the middle, and forms an altar table. A broad south aisle was built in the fifteenth century, but was stopped at the east wall of the porch. A small window, now filled in, directly above the altar, commanded a view of the aisle and the south altar of the chancel from the porch, and was closed on the side of the aisle by an iron grille. Such altars, however, must have been very rare. One may suggest that the altar at South

Pool contained relics, on which oaths were taken by those who came to the porch to settle business or disputes which might be terminated by mutual agreement, without being brought before the regular courts.

§ 36. From the fourteenth century onwards, porches with an upper story became common, and it is certain that much miscellaneous business may have been transacted in the chamber on the upper floor. This chamber, so frequently called a 'priest's room,' was used for several purposes. It was sometimes a chapel of the church. The north porch at Grantham was either rebuilt or extended northward in the fourteenth century: the lower story was vaulted, and the long upper chamber became the chapel in which the principal relics belonging to the church were preserved. Stairways were provided in each of the outer corner-turrets, one for those ascending to venerate the relics, the other for those descending, so that a free circulation was assured for devotees who visited the chapel on feast days. In addition, a window was made in the wall above the north door, through which the relics could be exhibited to worshippers inside the church. The vaulting was broken down at a later period, and the two stages combined into one. The south porch also has an upper chamber, which in later days, like so many similar chambers, contained the library of the

church. It was probably appropriated to the church-watcher, sometimes the deacon attached to the church, who slept there, and, from a small inner window which projects slightly from the wall, could gain a view of most of the interior of the building. In such



Fig. 10. Cirencester: south porch.

a case the watcher's room would probably also be used as the treasury of the church. The magnificent south porch at Cirencester, in three stages, has fan vaulting in the ground story: the upper rooms were used by the trade guilds of the town, and still form the Guildhall. The close connexion of the guilds with the

religious life of the place made the church their natural meeting-place; and their annual meetings were very generally held in the chapels where they maintained services in their parish church. The porch at Cirencester is called the Vice, a corruption of the word parvise (the Latin *parvisus* = *paradisus*) which is commonly, though inaccurately, applied to these storied porches. Among the splendid storied porches of the later middle ages may be mentioned those at Thaxted in Essex, Beccles in Suffolk, and Sall in Norfolk. The upper story of one of the porches at Sall contains a piscina, and was probably a chapel.

§ 37. It has been noted that there was occasionally an altar on the first floor of a tower. One still remains in place at St Michael Penkivel, near Truro, where the church was appropriated to a college of four chantry priests, and was rebuilt early in the fourteenth century. Certain indications have lately been found of another at Tansor, near Oundle: the conversion of this tower chamber into a chapel explains the otherwise pointless addition of a stair at the south-east angle of the tower, which seriously weakened the fabric. While the term 'priest's chamber,' as applied to the room over the porch, is by no means accurate, it is probable that such a room may sometimes have been used by a chantry priest, or as has been said, by the deacon who occasionally assisted the incumbent of a church. The most curious instance of a habitation in connexion

with a church is at Terrington St John's, in the Norfolk marshland, where the tower stands at some distance west of the south aisle, and is connected with it by a two-storied building, divided into chambers. There seems little reason to doubt that this dark and uncomfortable, but moderately roomy structure, with the first floor of the adjoining tower, was occupied by the curate who served the church. It is well, however, to look askance on the usual traditions which have led, for example, to the confident statement that the porch chambers at Grantham were the vicarages of the two rectorial portions of the church. Statements, also, with regard to the defensive use of church towers must carefully be guarded against, with the proviso that, in certain districts, there are indications that such an use was made of them. In some of the churches of north-west Yorkshire, from the end of the twelfth century onwards, towers were built with a strength which indicates that they might become strongholds in time of warfare; and there is positive evidence that the tower of Bedale church, in a district much exposed to the inroads of Scottish invaders, was intended to receive on occasion a body of defenders. The same thing is true of fortified towers, like that at Newton Nottage, on the coast of South Wales. In towers, again, like those of Llywel and Llanfihangel-Cwm-Du in Breconshire, and Llanfair-ar-y-Bryn in Carmarthenshire, the external construction speaks clearly of

the uses to which such towers might be put in time of war, while the strong barrel vaults of the ground floors, the ample planning of the turret stairs, and the presence in one case, till recent times, of a fire-place on the first floor, are further indications which support the idea.

§ 38. It should not be forgotten that a porch was occasionally used as the foundation of a tower. There is a good example of a northern porch tower at Cromhall in Gloucestershire and of a southern porch tower at Norbury in Derbyshire; but the finest instance is probably the south tower and spire of Donington in south Lincolnshire. The south tower at Fowey in Cornwall is another striking example. It was merely custom and tradition which made the west tower a nearly invariable feature in most districts of England during the greater part of the middle ages. It is obvious that the position of the tower in the plan is elastic, and we find it, not merely over the crossing of the transepts, or over a side porch, or at the extremity of a transept, or as an upward extension of a transeptal chapel, but also in a position detached from the church. The beautiful tower of West Walton in Norfolk is at the entrance to the churchyard, its ground story forming the gateway. In examples like this—Fleet and Tydd St Giles, in the same neighbourhood, stand apart in their churchyards—the insecure nature of the soil probably made the building of a

bell-tower in direct attachment to the church unsafe, and therefore undesirable.

§ 39. The Norman chancel in England was rectangular in the majority of cases. It was also narrower than the nave, from which it was divided by an arch. Such arches are almost invariably, until the middle of the twelfth century, round-headed, and are usually low in elevation. Their character and width, however, vary greatly. At North Witham the archway is low and narrow, and the arch is unmoulded; decoration is confined to the impost-blocks from which it springs. A wide space of wall is left on either side of the opening. When in the thirteenth century the chancel was enlarged, these spaces were pierced with wide pointed openings, presumably in order to give a better view of the altar from the body of the church. In north Yorkshire there are a large number of similar chancel arches, the narrowness and plainness of which have sometimes induced antiquaries to class them as Saxon. Saxon in affinity they may well be; but at Scawton on the Hambleton hills, where one of them occurs, and the wall on either side is pierced with late Norman openings, we know that the church was built in 1146. At Bracebridge, near Lincoln, where there is a fairly lofty and narrow chancel arch of early character and uncertain date, there are openings, apparently later than the rest of the work, at the sides. These

openings are not carried down to the ground in any of the cases mentioned; and there were probably altars against the wall below them, as was certainly the case at Castle Rising in Norfolk, and Avening in Gloucestershire, where towers occur between nave and chancel. Were such openings invariable, or were they even contemporary with the chancel arch, we might see in them a survival of the triple-arched screen wall of early Saxon times. But they are quite exceptional; and at North Witham both, and at Castle Rising one, are much later than the chancel arch. More frequently the chancel arch is given elaborate architectural treatment, with moulded orders and jamb-shafts, and occupies most of the width, and practically the whole height of the chancel behind. Early Saxon chancel arches were very narrow, as is the case at Escomb and Bradford on Avon—so narrow as to shut off the chancel from the nave. This may have been a survival of the primitive practice which kept, by means of curtains drawn round the canopy of the altar, the consecration of the sacred elements in the Eucharist from the public eye. All through the middle ages, it was customary during Lent to hang a curtain or Lenten veil across the chancel arch; and in many English churches hooks for its support may still be seen. A narrow chancel arch would be much more serviceable for this purpose than a wide one; and its persistent

continuance through the twelfth century may perhaps be attributed to this usage.

§ 40. While, in the enlargement of a church, the nave was usually widened by the addition of aisles, the chancel was in most cases lengthened, and was often rebuilt entirely, in order to provide more room for the stalls of the quire. Thus, at Sandiacre in Derbyshire, the twelfth century nave and chancel arch were left untouched, but a splendid chancel was built in place of the old one during the fourteenth century. The screen which divided chancel from nave is gone; but nowhere can we appreciate better the practical separation between the parishioners' portion of the church, and that devoted to the clergy and quire, which, in churches like this, became almost as marked as in the monastic and larger collegiate churches. The lengthened chancel, forming a deep aisleless projection to the east of the building, was often treated with great architectural dignity. Nothing could be more beautiful, from their very simplicity of design, than the chancels of Mitford in Northumberland, or Burgh-next-Aylsham in Norfolk, with their row of lancet windows in the side walls, and the marked projection of their string-courses and buttresses. Later in the thirteenth century, the chancel of Houghton-le-Spring church, near Durham, gives us another example from the north of England of spacious planning, with light admitted through a row of splayed lancets. The

chancel of the collegiate church of St Andrew, Bishop Auckland, enlarged about 1250 or rather later, underwent further alteration not long after, by the substitution of broader two-light openings for the narrower lancets, and of a large mullioned east window for a group of lancets at the east end. In Yorkshire, the chancel of West Heslerton, a simple aisleless church, was lengthened and lightened by a row of lancets not unlike those at Houghton-le-Spring. Further south, the nobility which long lancet windows in bays divided by projecting buttresses, and marked by the strong horizontal lines of string-courses, can give to an architectural composition, is shewn by the chancel of the cruciform church of Hedon, near Hull. Less elaborate, but even more striking by virtue of the height, narrowness, and wide internal splay of the lancet openings, is the chancel of Bottesford in north Lincolnshire. Cherry Hinton, near Cambridge, possibly reaches the high water mark of chancel building which depends for its effect on the arrangement of lancet windows. Acton Burnell in Shropshire, recalls Cherry Hinton in the piercing of its side walls by rows of lancets, with trefoiled rere-arches ; but its east window is a composition of four lights, with geometrical tracery, and marks the transition to an even more imposing type of chancel, in which the side walls are pierced with large traceried windows, and the outside and inside of the building alike are

marked by architectural treatment of great beauty, and even splendour. Some of the earliest of these fourteenth century chancels may be found in the east of England. Great Sampford in Essex stands on the border-line between the two centuries. Dennington in Suffolk, a chancel of unequalled beauty, comes within the first quarter of the fourteenth century. Somewhat later is Stebbing in Essex, and a little later still is Great Bardfield. In both of these churches, close to one another, nave and chancel alike were rebuilt, and the arch between them filled with a screen of open tracery in stone. The chancel of Lawford, near Colchester, followed about the middle of the fourteenth century: its chief feature is the licence given to the curvilinear tracery of its windows. Impulse may have been given to this outbreak of energy in the east of England by the great building works undertaken at old St Paul's during the latter part of the thirteenth century: all the examples cited, with the exception of Dennington, are within the bounds of the ancient diocese of London. Further examples which give colour to this view might be cited, such as the chancel which the Cistercians of Tilty, near Dunmow, added to their church, as the beginning of a complete rebuilding, about the beginning of the fourteenth century.

§ 41. But even more conspicuous than these are the chancels which are found with some

frequency in the ancient and widespread dioceses of York, Lincoln, and Lichfield. The chief features of these are, traceried windows of great beauty of proportion and variety of design, with carefully moulded arches and jambs, boldly projecting buttresses with gables or pinnacles, strings and base courses carried right round the building, often with much elaboration. The internal furniture includes stone piscinae and sedilia, canopied niches on each side of the east window, founders' tombs, and, in some cases, stone Easter sepulchres in the north wall. In almost every case, the masonry is composed of large dressed stones; and the building capacity of the masons reaches a high level of architectural skill. The probable source of the development of masonry and sculpture shewn in these structures is to be found in the architectural work which was going on at York during the last quarter of the thirteenth and first quarter of the fourteenth century. It can be shewn that the York school of masoncraft had some influence at Lincoln. Its influence at Southwell, the southern *matrix ecclesia* of the diocese of York, is undoubted. That it had some influence as far south as the lady chapel of Ely, begun in 1321, is very probable; and the work done there may have reacted in a northward direction. Its influence at Lichfield, during the episcopate of Walter Langton (1296–1321), is more than probable, as Langton was intimately connected with York from

his early years till his death. In Yorkshire, the rebuilding of the cruciform church at Patrington was completed, with the chancel, towards 1350. Earlier than this, probably between 1320 and 1330, the chancels of Patrick Brompton, Kirkby Wiske, and Ainderby Steeple had been built: Croft, near Darlington, and Romaldkirk in Teesdale, belong to much the same period and sphere of influence. Round Southwell and Lincoln, and probably during the same decade, the greatest triumphs of the period were achieved. The founder of the chancel of Hawton, near Newark, died in 1330. The rector who was the founder of the chancel of Heckington, near Sleaford, was presented by the crown in 1308–9, and had licence to found a chantry in the church, probably at the high altar of the rebuilt chancel, in 1328. The chancel of Navenby, near Lincoln, belongs to the same period. At Sibthorpe, near Newark, a college of chantry priests was founded by stages during the first half of the fourteenth century, and the present chancel seems to have been built about 1330: the founder, as already noted, rebuilt the aisles of his church at Beckingham, a few miles away, before 1347. The architectural likeness between his work at Beckingham and the chancel of Boothby Pagnell, near Grantham, built about 1350, cannot be mistaken. The whole church of Fledborough, north of Newark, was rebuilt, probably about 1343, when a chantry was founded in the lady chapel.

Other Nottinghamshire chancels, the probable date of which is 1330–40, are Arnold (much rebuilt), Car Colston, and Woodborough. A certain number of chancels in Leicestershire, such as that of East Langton, approximate to the type, without actually



Fig. 11. Patrington, Yorkshire : north side of chancel and vestry.

reproducing it; but at Cotterstock, in Northamptonshire, where John Giffard, canon of York, founded a college of chantry priests in 1337, its familiar features reappear. It reached the diocese of Lichfield—or,

at any rate, Derbyshire—rather later than the period of its general diffusion in the dioceses of York and Lincoln. The chancel of Sandiacre belongs to the decade between 1330 and 1340: Dronfield, which, in proportions and parapet and pinnacle-work, is closely akin to Sandiacre, is later than 1340; Norbury and the handsome chancel of Tideswell are later still, probably 1350–60. The chantry college of Chaddesden, founded in 1355, adds another church, with a smaller and less ambitious chancel, to the group. In the north-western part of Lichfield diocese, the fine vaulted chancel of the collegiate church of Nantwich (1327–33) is probably independent of the general type. There can be no mistake, however, about Halsall in south Lancashire. Here the date, although the later window tracery seems to contradict it, appears to be at latest 1340–50; and the likeness of the internal arrangements to those of the north Yorkshire churches is quite remarkable. In a few instances, the type persisted till much later. The chancel at Claypole, near Newark, was rebuilt about 1400: the fourteenth century nave has a noticeable affinity, in the sculpture of its capitals, to the nave of Patrington. Between 1380 and 1400, the chancel of Burneston, in north Yorkshire, shews distinct traces of the influence of Patrick Brompton and the other neighbouring buildings already mentioned. Burneston, Patrick Brompton, and Croft, were all connected with

St Mary's abbey at York. The convent, as rector of Burneston, may have been responsible for the chancel, when the whole church was rebuilt. But it must be repeated that the spread of architecture in parish churches is due to local piety rather than to the desire of religious houses to found churches in places from which they derived their income. The founder of the chancel of Heckington was not the impropriating abbey of Bardney, but a well-to-do king's clerk, who was presented to the vicarage by Edward II during a voidance of the abbey. Further, the spread of this particular type of chancel cannot be referred to St Mary's abbey or any other monastery, but to the growth of a school of lay masoncraft which learned its earliest lessons among the new buildings of St Mary's abbey and York minster. As we should expect in a period which was so fruitful in good work, isolated types of almost equal beauty, the result of original local skill, constantly make their appearance. Such are the chancels of North Luffenham in Rutland, or of Hodgeston in Pembrokeshire—the latter, no doubt, one of the fruits of that movement in the diocese of St David's, to which bishop Henry Gower (1328–47) gave a powerful impulse.

§ 42. The aisleless chancel survived as a favourite feature of the plan all through the middle ages. The aisled nave, with the deep aisleless chancel beyond, is beautiful in plan and elevation alike; and hardly any



Fig. 12. Walpole St Peter: from N.E.

of the great Norfolk churches is so satisfactory in effect as the fourteenth century church at Tunstead, or the great fifteenth century church of Walpole St Peter, where the rebuilding of the chancel followed that of the nave. The wealthy lay folk of East Anglia naturally took charge of the repair of the nave as their own part of the church. The rectors, monastic or otherwise, were less active about the chancel. The result is that the uniform magnificence of Walpole St Peter is by no means found everywhere. The small vaulted thirteenth century chancel at Blakeney in north-east Norfolk, is quite out of proportion to the large fifteenth century nave and west tower. The magnificent church of Sall, near Aylsham, was entirely rebuilt in the fifteenth century; but the proportions of the chancel are very modest compared with the gigantic nave. Lavenham in Suffolk has one of the most ornate naves of the later part of the fifteenth century, and a tower of great height. The fourteenth century chancel, however, was kept, and, although chapels were added to it on the north and south, the eastern bay is insignificant in proportion and rough in masonry when contrasted with the nave. A similar disparity, not of style but of design, exists between the nave and tower of Stoke-by-Nayland and the less carefully rebuilt chancel. The rebuilding of a chancel may occasionally indicate that monastic impropriators neglected their duties, until they were compelled to

repair. The hastily rebuilt chancel at Harringworth in Northamptonshire, where Elstow abbey was rector, is in striking contrast to the earlier nave, and may perhaps be explained in this way. Croyland abbey had to attend to its duties at Wellingborough in 1383, and the present aisled chancel is the result. At Walpole St Peter the church was evidently lengthened eastwards. The parishioners were probably allowed to pull down the old chancel when they built their new nave, and to encroach on its site: they naturally would contribute towards the new chancel, and this may account for the unusual splendour of the whole design.

§ 43. Medieval sacristies attached to chancels, and especially to aisleless chancels, are common, and are in most cases on the north side, with a door in the north wall close to the altar. Good examples of an ordinary kind are at Islip and Aldwinkle St Peter in Northants. There is a fourteenth century sacristy at Willingham, near Cambridge, with a vaulted ceiling. The vaulted vestry at Burford is of the fifteenth century. Sometimes the sacristy contained an altar, as at Claypole and Westborough, between Newark and Grantham; and it is probable that the sacristies of several of the beautiful chancels already alluded to, as at Hawton, had their altars, which might be used occasionally for mass, but would in any case be useful for laying out and folding up

vestments before and after service. The sacristy at Heckington is of two stories, the lower probably intended to be a bone-hole. At Halsall there is a handsome doorway, west of the founder's tomb, through which a chantry chapel is entered: this may have been a sacristy in the first instance. Large sacristies of two, and even three stories are found. The upper room or solar, as at Raunds in Northants, Wath, near Ripon, and other places, was sometimes provided with a window opening into the chancel, and may have served, like the solar of the south porch at Grantham, as the treasury of the church and a room for the deacon or church watcher. But that these upper rooms may have been provided as extra chantry chapels is also probable. The very interesting vestry building between Peterhouse and its appropriated church of Little St Mary's at Cambridge seems to have contained the chantry chapel of John Warkworth, master of Peterhouse, on its upper floor: there is also a piscina in the small lower sacristy, which stands above a bone-hole. The originally very similar building between St Benet's church and Corpus appears to have had chantry chapels on both floors. Perhaps the best example of a two-storied sacristy is the semi-octagonal building, vaulted on both floors, at the east end of the north chancel aisle at Long Sutton, Lincolnshire. This is an exceptional situation; but there was no fixed place for the sacristy. Often, as

at Darlington or as the vaulted vestry at Rushton, Northants, it is on the south side of the chancel. In certain places, as at St Peter Mancroft in Norwich, and Lavenham in Suffolk, it projects from the east wall of the church, below the east window, and is entered by a doorway at one or both sides of the altar. Sometimes, again, as at Sawley and Tideswell in Derbyshire, the altar was brought forward from the east wall, and provided with a stone screen wall or reredos, the space between which and the east wall became the sacristy. A similar screening off of the east end of an aisle is found, for example, at Rushden and Higham Ferrers in Northants: in these cases, it has been effected without interfering, as at Tansor, with the proper spacing of the aisle.

§ 44. Three features which are specially noticeable in the planning of the aisleless chancel may be mentioned here. The first is the very usual provision of squints, or oblique piercings, through the backs of the responds of the chancel arch. One object of these was to enable the priest, celebrating at the aisle altar, to see what was going on at the high altar, if his mass happened to coincide with or overlap another service. They would also be of use to the ringer of the sanctus bell, when the bell-cote was above the chancel arch, and the rope hung down at the side, out of sight of the altar. The second point is the occurrence of a separate door, for the use of the

priest, in the south wall of the chancel: this was provided in a very large number of cases, and, though usually small, was often treated with some architectural dignity. At Trunch in Norfolk it is covered by a small porch. The third point, which has been the



Fig. 13. Wensley, Yorkshire: chancel and S. aisle from S.E., shewing low side window.

cause of much controversy, is the presence of a window, usually in the south wall of the chancel, and near its west end, the level of which is generally just above the back of the chancel stalls. This is known as a 'low

side' window. These windows are not confined to chancels, nor to one side of the chancel only: sometimes, as at Acaster Malbis, near York, and Burton Lazars in Leicestershire, they are on both sides of the chancel; here and there, as at Gretton, Northants, on the north side only. Their design also varies. Not infrequently separate windows, they are formed quite as often by lowering the sill of a single-light or two-light window, and cutting off the lower from the upper part by a transom or cross mullion. Where this arrangement was adopted, the upper part of the window was glazed, but the lower portion seems generally to have been closed by shutters. Many fanciful explanations, which have little foundation in common sense, have been given for the use of these windows. Most popular has been the idea that they were used by lepers, who could not take part in the common services of the church, but could assist at mass and even be communicated through these windows. This fancy disregards the sanitary precautions of the middle ages, which were excellent and plentiful. We may well believe that the people of Burton Lazars would have been horrified, if they had seen, one Sunday morning at mass, their two low side windows darkened by sufferers from the dreadful disease, for whom a hospital with its chapel was carefully provided in their own village. A very widely accepted theory is that low side windows

were used in connexion with the consecration of the elements at mass: a small hand-bell may have been rung at the window, so as to be heard outside the church, especially where the village lay on the south side. Churches are comparatively few in which, as at March or Walpole St Peter, a special cot was provided for a sanctus bell above the chancel arch. At Hawstead in Suffolk a sanctus bell remains in position on the inner side of the chancel screen. In the aisleless church of Preen in Shropshire, where the chancel, belonging to a small cell of monks, a colony from Wenlock, was divided by a screen from the parochial nave, there is a low side window in the north wall, just west of the place where the screen originally stood with an altar against it. The window has a lowered sill, with a stone seat on either side; and its position suggests that it may have been used for the above purpose. A seat at the window, as at Morpeth, would have been useful for the server who rang the bell; but some think that it may have been used by the priest in hearing confessions. The common explanation of any unfamiliar object in a church is that it had to do with confession; and one therefore hesitates to adopt a solution of the difficulty which is so open to suspicion. But there are certainly windows which are recessed too deeply to allow of the sanctus bell being audible through them, and no existing example affords any real convenience

for confessions. It is difficult, moreover, to explain, on the sanctus bell or confession hypotheses, why, at Othery in Somerset, there should be not merely a low side window in the south chancel wall, but a corresponding opening through the south-east buttress of the central tower, evidently planned in relation to the window. Also why, in some examples, is there a hook, as though for a hanging lamp, in the soffit of the window-head? Cases of this kind have been explained, with much learning, by the possible use of the 'low side' window as a place for a lamp, which was hung there to frighten evil spirits from the churchyard, and could be trimmed from the outside by merely opening the shutters. To those who know anything of medieval thought, this is not unlikely. No explanation yet advanced is wholly satisfactory. The difference of opinion leads to the conclusion that the use of the low side window was not one and invariable, and that it may have been intended for more than one use, but the sanctus bell hypothesis appears to fit the largest number of cases. The fact that cots for sanctus bells are, as a rule, comparatively late additions to buildings, should be taken into account in considering the use of the low side window. In our own day, it often serves the very practical purpose of giving additional light to the west end of a very dark chancel; but this can hardly have been its original object.

§ 45. The double crypt at Grantham, below the south chapel of the chancel, is not a very usual feature. The entrance to the Grantham crypt was originally by two external doors, which still remain. In process of time, it is not improbable that the relics, which at an earlier date were in the chapel above the north porch,



Fig. 14. St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol: from the north-east.

were translated to the eastern crypt. A stairway, with a very imposing doorway at its head, was made to it from the south side of the chancel in the early part of the fifteenth century. A certain number of crypts of Saxon date still remain beneath chancels:

these, however, are few, and perhaps the last survival of the *confessio* in the English parish church is the aisled crypt at Lastingham, near Pickering. The greater part of a twelfth century crypt, with ribbed vaulting, remains beneath the chancel at Newark. Where the church is built on ground with a steep slope eastward, it is more economical to build the chancel on an open crypt, which also may have its uses as a bone-house when the churchyard is cleared, than to build it on a solid lower stage. This accounts for the crypts at Bedale and Thirsk in Yorkshire, and Madley, near Hereford, which are really lower stories to the chancel, and not subterranean chambers. The Lastingham crypt is also built on an abrupt eastward slope. The site of St Mary Redcliffe at Bristol allowed for the construction of large crypt-chambers on its south side and beneath the lady chapel. Sometimes, as at Hythe in Kent, the floor of the chancel was raised to make room for a crypt below. Such crypts were used as bone-houses, when the churchyard was disturbed to make room for new burials. The crypt beneath the south aisle at Rothwell, in Northamptonshire, contains a collection of bones to which, as to that at Hythe, ill-founded legends have been attached. Both these large bone-holes contain altars, at which masses for the dead were said: there is also an altar in the eastern crypt at Grantham. Sometimes, as at Oundle and St Mary Magdalene's, Bridgwater, there

is a small crypt or bone-hole beneath one of the transeptal chapels. Bone-holes also occur beneath the east end of an aisle, as at Higham Ferrers in Northamptonshire, and Hallaton in Leicestershire. At Burford, St Thomas' chapel, to the west of the south transept, has its floor raised to give headway to the vault of the bone-hole below. A similar bone-hole is entered from the interior of the south aisle at Bosham, in Sussex: the altar at the end of the aisle is raised on a platform above it, as the floor of the hole is only a little below the level of the aisle. The splendid twelfth century crypt at St Mary's, Warwick, extended beneath the chancel and transepts of the collegiate church, and is to be classified with the crypts or lower churches of our Norman cathedrals, rather than with the less ambitious crypts of our parish churches.

CHAPTER IV

THE FURNITURE OF A MEDIEVAL PARISH CHURCH: CONCLUSION

§ 46. Our parish churches, as we have them to-day, are stripped of much that made them beautiful. The cold walls, often scraped of all their plaster and whitewash; the windows, glazed with white glass, or with modern glass of very uncertain merit, reveal merely the structural skeleton of the building. The robe of colour with which the interior was clothed is gone; and only fragments here and there remain to tell us of the beauty of the decorative art which was, at the close of the middle ages, at its very highest point. But enough is left to enable us to picture to ourselves the appearance of the interior of an English medieval church, and reconstruct that arrangement of furniture and pictorial decoration which made it so beautiful.

§ 47. To take, first, the features common to nave and chancel alike, the walls of the building were covered with paintings executed on a plaster surface.

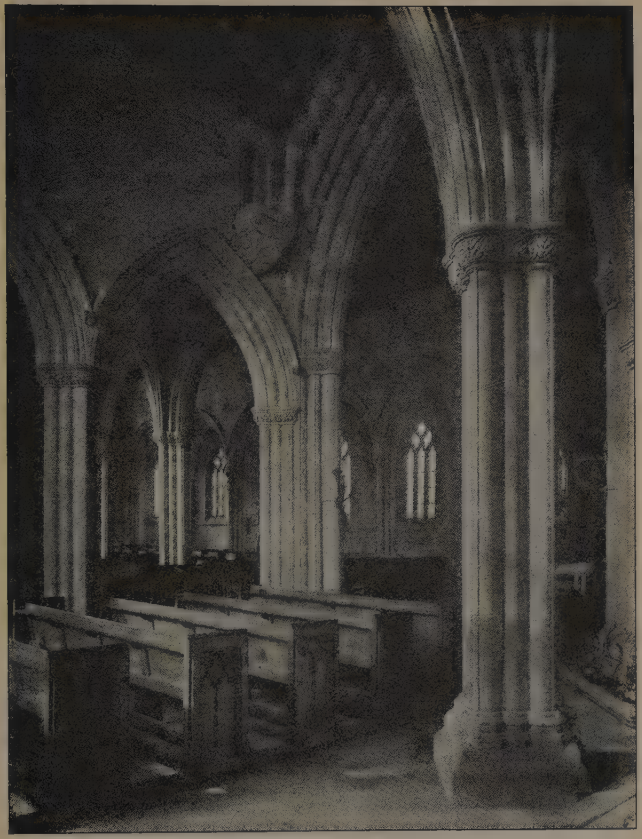


Fig. 15. Patrington, Yorks: interior, looking across nave from south transept.

As might be expected, the best remains of such paintings are to be found in districts where the churches are built of rubble, and the plaster covering, necessary to the internal wall-surface, afforded the fullest field for this form of decoration. There are numerous and beautiful examples in Sussex and Surrey, from which a good idea may be gained of the general scheme of painting in a medieval church. The earlier wall-paintings, such as those at Copford in Essex, or South Leigh in Oxfordshire, or the probably thirteenth century paintings at Easby in Yorkshire, are stiff in drawing and somewhat crude in colouring. From the earliest times, however, this method of decoration was adopted, and gradually assumed a more independent existence and a more pictorial character. As the history of art advanced, and the demand for special kinds of work increased, the lesser arts, hitherto treated as mere servants of masoncraft, began to strike out paths for themselves. The painters at Pickering in Yorkshire or at Raunds in Northamptonshire, treated the walls on which they worked as the backgrounds of strong and brightly coloured designs bearing no relation to the architectural divisions of the building. Where the space to be covered was limited, like the wall between two aisle windows, the treatment was more restrained: in these positions there occur, as at St Breage in Cornwall, panel pictures of saints. In the north aisle at Kettering

there is a faded picture of St Roch, the blue background of which, studded with gold stars, is a beautiful example of medieval colour. But the general treatment pursued by the later medieval painters, in their subject and figure painting, was unconfined by architectural limits, and sometimes a single subject spreads below and round a window. Above the chancel arch was usually a painting of the Doom, of which traces remain in many churches, as at Holy Trinity, Coventry, and (much restored) at St Thomas, Salisbury. At Liddington in Rutland and at Kettering, the Doom seems to have been extended to the north and south walls of the nave: there is on the north clerestory wall at Kettering, a figure of an angel looking towards the middle of the wall above the chancel arch; while there are remains on the south wall at Liddington, of a huge whale-like figure representing the mouth of Hades. The subjects represented in these paintings were of the utmost variety. A good idea of the beauty of colour attained by the artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries may be gained from a study of the fragmentary figure and pattern paintings at Cirencester or the important remains at Bloxham. To the end of the middle ages much pattern and diaper work was used in painting large surfaces or filling in backgrounds. In several Northamptonshire churches the soffits of arches are covered with reddish

brown scrolls of leafage, at its best most elaborate and delicate. The shafts in the angles of the tower at Fairford are painted with a spiral pattern in two colours, like a barber's pole, and at Fairford and Burford there are important remains of late diapered backgrounds. One of the best pieces of fifteenth century diaper painting known to the present writer is that above the chancel arch at Llanbedr-ystrad-yw in Breconshire, which served as a background to a rood and figures of St Mary and St John.

§ 48. Mural painting, however, was little more than a complement to the stained or painted windows, which were the most gorgeous note of colour in the medieval fabric. There is no more familiar feature of medieval architecture than the gradual increase in the size of windows, due to that constant progress in the science of architectural construction, in which the timber-roofed parish church followed the vaulted cathedral. The low round-headed windows of the twelfth century were followed by the long lancets of the early thirteenth century. Lancets gradually drew closer and closer together, and were united with spherical openings above, until the mullioned window with its geometrical tracery was formed. The restless spirit of the medieval craftsman was not satisfied with tracery imprisoned within geometrical limits: the enclosing circles and triangles were removed, and the tracery twined in naturalistic curves in the

head of the window. Then, at the middle of the fourteenth century, the limit of the imitation of nature was reached. The Black Death formed a sudden division between the work of the old school and the new age, and that formalism in window tracery began, which lasted for years, and left its mark on our architecture as late as the days of the Stewarts. It was long the fashion among those who saw merely the decline in architectural detail, distinctive of the 'Perpendicular' style, to speak of the magnificent achievements of the fifteenth century masons with an overbearing contempt. As a matter of fact, fifteenth century builders were gifted with a power of design, and an ability to plan a parish church as a whole, unequalled in the previous history of medieval art. They lost their interest in sculptured detail, because their main concern was with the broad contrasts of light, shade, and colour, which their large windows and high walls afforded—contrasts in which there was no use for minute detail, and the deep under-cutting and delicate carving of the earlier styles became mere waste of time. The great sheets of coloured glass, in which, as time went on, painting became of more and more importance, and large figures beneath tall canopies of white glass took the place of the smaller subjects and more deeply coloured canopies and grounds of an earlier time, supplied an effect fully as beautiful as that once given by the

contrasts of bold projections and deep hollows in moulded arches and carved foliage. The mason in no small degree sacrificed his skill to the glazier; but, in the service of the glazier, his power of noble design on a large scale increased. No effect of colour can well surpass that which is still to be seen in some of our late medieval churches—the grisaille windows of the chancel at Norbury in Derbyshire, the late fourteenth century figure glass of the north aisle at Lowick in Northamptonshire, the fifteenth century east window of the south aisle at St Winnow in Cornwall, the fourteenth century Jesse tree, once in St Chad's, and now in St Mary's at Shrewsbury, or the fifteenth century Jesse tree at Llanrhaiadr-yn-Cynmerch, near Denbigh. Some of the parish churches of York are almost as rich in glass as the cathedral itself. But, in those churches which are still so fortunate as to retain nearly all their medieval glass, like All Saints, North Street, at York, St Neot in Cornwall, and Fairford, the lack of the connecting link which the mural paintings between the windows formed in the colour-scheme is sadly felt. At Fairford, in particular, where the wall-painting which remains is not near the windows, the glass, in its frame of cold plastered wall, gives the effect of isolated masses of almost violent colour, which need to be reduced to their proper key by the painting of the intermediate wall surfaces. On the other hand, at Pickering or Raunds, where we

have the mural paintings, the glass is wanting. Often, where painting and stained glass have both disappeared, as in the chapel at South Skirlaugh, their necessity to the building forces itself on the attention. Probably, the full value of stained and painted glass in architectural design, and the relations which prevailed at the close of the middle ages between the mason and glazier, can be judged nowhere in Europe better than in King's college chapel at Cambridge.

§ 49. The third source of colour to the church, apart from the stonework and the stained glass, was the woodwork of roofs, screens, and other pieces of furniture. With this must be reckoned also the colour of the stone furniture of the church, the sedilia, canopied tombs, stone reredoses, pulpits, and so on. As a rule, the colouring of the stone, here as upon the walls, has faded away or has been obscured by later coats of plaster or whitewash. Here and there, as at Higham Ferrers, a tomb-canopy keeps not a little of its original brilliance. There is a gorgeous coloured frame, probably much restored, for a reredos in the north chapel at Worstead in Norfolk. The panels of the reredos in the south aisle at Northleach contain certain figures of saints, in faded green, red, and blue. The fine reredoses in the side chapels of St Cuthbert's at Wells have brilliant remains of gilding. But coloured woodwork, which has lost little of its brightness, is fairly common, and, though it has often

been subjected to drastic restoration, is sometimes almost untouched by time. This type of art reached its highest point in the churches of East Anglia, in the great roofs, with their figures of angels at the end of the hammerbeams or at the foot of the principal rafters, extending from end to end of the building, in the canopies of the fonts, like that at Ufford St Mary, near Woodbridge, and in the rood screens, like that at Ranworth, its openings fringed with cusping of gilded plaster, and its panels painted with figures of saints and archangels, which sometimes, as at Southwold, were set within a raised frame of gilded gesso work.

§ 50. This setting of colour, towards which stone, wood, and glass all contributed their share, constituted the great beauty of the internal effect of a medieval parish church; and naturally, the more the various craftsmen who worked there advanced in skill—their skill growing in proportion to their opportunity—the more gorgeous was the effect of the assemblage of brilliant windows, screens, and pictured walls. The usual entrance would be through the south porch. Near the entrance, or, at any rate, near the west end of the church, stood the font, beneath its canopy. No piece of church furniture was subject to so much variety of design as the font; and the types vary from perfectly unadorned examples to structures of the utmost richness. The canopy was sometimes a simple



Fig. 16. Well, Yorkshire: font cover.

cover, which could be moved by hand: often it was a towering structure, suspended by pulleys from the ceiling: sometimes it formed a roofed enclosure on carved uprights, within which the font stood, of stone at Luton in Bedfordshire, of wood at Trunch in Norfolk. Some fonts, like the famous one at Little Walsingham in Norfolk, perhaps the most beautiful of those on which the seven Sacraments are represented, stand on high stepped platforms: others are on a low plinth, which is occasionally continued from the base of a neighbouring column. In fact, the arrangement of fonts is as various as their shape. The rest of the furniture of the nave would vary. Some of the East Anglian churches, such as Irstead in Norfolk, or Dennington and Fressingfield in Suffolk, keep many of the medieval benches, with narrow seats, backs with carved lines of open-work, and projecting ledges which to-day are used for book-rests, but were originally intended as kneelers. Worshippers would kneel on these ledges, with their feet on the seats behind: the age of hassocks had not come, and the floor was hardly an ideal kneeling place. Many English churches were seated with benches of this kind during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Few parts of England are without their examples of bench-ends. Many fine examples remain in Cornwall, as at Launcells, and in Somerset, as at Trull; and in some churches, as Down St Mary and Lapford in Devon,

the early sixteenth century bench-ends are almost complete. Wooden benches, however, do not seem to have become general till a comparatively late date, and there was probably little seating accommodation in the earlier churches. The plinths of columns were sometimes made of some size, as at Coddington in Notts, to afford seats; and in some churches, as Belaugh and Tunstead in Norfolk, and Cotterstock, Tansor, and Warmington in Northamptonshire, there are stone benches round the inner walls of various parts of the church, apparently for the same purpose.

§ 51. At the east end of each aisle, as has been shewn, there was very frequently an altar. This was enclosed within screens, shutting off, as a rule, the eastern part of the aisle. The screens remain at Dennington, where the loft above the rood screen was continued round them, with fine effect. At Wolborough in south Devon, the side screens also project from the main screen; and, in many cases where the screens themselves have disappeared, holes in the adjacent columns, vertical grooves in the bases, and other similar signs, bear witness to their former existence. All the side altars of a church would be fenced in by screens. In large churches, such as Grantham, there was often more than one chapel in an aisle: the north and south aisles of the nave at Grantham contained at least two chapels each. There

were four chapels in the south aisle at Ludlow, three in the north: the transepts each contained two chapels; and, in addition to these, five of the arches of the nave had chapels beneath them, while the altar of the Cross stood at the east end of the nave in front of the tower.

§ 52. A nave like this would be broken up by a great variety of screen-work; for the clear vista from end to end and side to side of a building, so dear to the restorer of the middle of the nineteenth century, formed no part of the medieval ideal. A space, however, would be kept clear near the pulpit, which, at Ludlow, stood west of the first pier from the east of the north arcade. The stone pulpit at Cirencester is in much the same position; at Wolverhampton, it is on the south side of the nave; at Nantwich it is against the north-east pier; at Holy Trinity, Coventry, against the south-east pier of the central tower. The medieval pulpits of Devonshire stand just west of the rood screen; some, like Kenton, on the north; others, like Dartmouth, on the south side of the entrance. The sermon was hardly so prominent a feature in the services of the medieval church as it became at a later date; but many medieval pulpits remain, and those at Wolverhampton and Coventry, in particular, are imposing structures. The regular furniture of the nave was completed by the pulpit. However, there are some other features to notice. Each altar,

or, at any rate, each of the more important altars, would have its own piscina: the chantries at the ends of the aisles sometimes had their own sedile or sedilia. On a bracket near, or in a niche behind each altar, would be a figure, carved and painted, of the saint to whom it was dedicated; and before certain altars where a light or lights were maintained there would be hanging lamps or stands for candles according to the endowment. Thomas Sibthorpe, when he founded his chapels at Beckingham, provided for lights before each altar: in the chantry certificates made under the chantry act of Edward VI, many notices are found of stocks of money by which lights were maintained to burn before specified altars. There would be a holy water stoup in the wall, on the right hand as one entered the church: often the stoup is found in the porch. In some of the Norfolk churches—Sall, Cawston, Aylsham, and Worstead are the best instances—the lower part of the tower is screened off from the nave, the screen supporting a floor which forms a ringers' gallery. In the ringers' gallery at Sall there is a kind of crane, by which the cover of the font, which stands close to the west end, is lifted. In a few churches, as at Weston-in-Gordano in Somerset, there are remains of a small gallery above the main doorway of the church. This is sometimes explained as a gallery used on Palm Sunday by the semi-chorus who joined in chanting

the processional hymn. Such a gallery might be used by singers or minstrels on special occasions.

§ 53. The transepts, where they occur, were, as has already been said, used as chapels, or divided off into more than one chapel. Little need be said of the chapels on either side of the chancel, as the general arrangement of their altars and furniture was not very different from that of the chancel itself. The quire and chancel were divided from the nave by the rood screen. This important piece of furniture, usually of wood, but sometimes of stone, crossed the chancel arch from side to side; and was often continued, in churches where the chancel arch was omitted, across the west end of the chancel aisles. Where there was a chancel arch, the chancel chapels had their own screens. The rood screen was elaborately carved, and its lower panels were painted with figures of angels, saints, prophets, apostles, and other designs. The uprights dividing the panels were continued upwards on either side of open panels, sometimes treated as tall arched openings, at other times imitating the form of mullioned windows, and were framed into a plinth at the bottom, and a horizontal beam at the top. The central division of the screen was closed by folding doors: on either side of this entrance was sometimes, against the west side of the screen, an altar. At Ranworth in Norfolk the screen altars are enclosed by panels returned from the face



Fig. 17. Banwell, Somerset: rood screen.

of the screen: there are distinct traces of this arrangement at Weston-in-Gordano and other places; and, at Lapford and Swymbridge in Devon, there are large rectangular openings in the traceried panels of the upper part of the screens, across which painted cloths seem to have been stretched at the back of the side altars. Above the screen, with its floor-beams laid across the top, and attached to either face by a series of trusses which formed a deep coved and ribbed cornice to the screen, was the loft, gallery, or, as it was often called, the 'solar.' Sometimes, as at Montgomery and Llanwnog, the screen was double, the floor of the loft forming a roof to the space between. This upper story had a projecting parapet on either side, the front of which was divided into panels and painted. It was approached by a staircase, the position of which varied greatly. In churches with an aisleless chancel, the stair was contained in a turret to the north or south of the chancel arch, which was, if there was little room for it, sometimes built out into the adjacent chapel. At Dennington, however, where the loft was continued round the screens at the end of the nave aisles, the staircase is in the south wall of the south aisle. At Ropsley, near Grantham, the stair is in the outer wall of the north aisle, near the north-east corner; and the loft was approached by a bridge thrown across the end of the north aisle. In the aisleless church of Little Hereford, near Tenbury,

where there is a very narrow chancel arch, the loft was approached by a straight stair in the thickness of the south half of the east wall: a right-angled turn at the top led straight into the loft. In churches with aisled chancels, the stair was commonly contained in a turret projecting from the outer side of the north or south wall, and there were lofts continued across all the screens of the chancel and its chapels. At Llywel in Breconshire, there is a fairly broad straight staircase at right angles to the loft, contained in a broad projection from the north wall of the aisleless nave: this was a favourite arrangement in Wales, and occurs at Patricio, and, in the more primitive form of a wooden stair within a projecting window, at Llanwnog in Montgomeryshire. Wooden stairs and even ladders to lofts were probably not unusual. At Totnes the chief approach to the loft of the stone screen was a stairway in a half-octagon, projecting into the north part of the chancel, from the head of which the way lay along the loft of the adjoining parclose screen. Few lofts, however, remain. The Totnes loft, which was of wood, is gone. Several Welsh lofts, owing, no doubt, to their remote position, escaped destruction when the general dismantling of rood lofts was carried out in the reign of Elizabeth. The most magnificent of these are at Patricio in Breconshire, Llanegryn in Merionethshire, Montgomery and Llanwnog in Montgomeryshire, and Llananno in

Radnorshire. Less beautiful, but remarkable for the very perfect state of its painted back-board, is the loft at Llanelieu in Breconshire. But in remote English places, such as Blackawton, near Dartmouth, Cotes-by-Stow in Lincolnshire, and Hubberholm in west Yorkshire, lofts are left in a fair state of perfection.

§ 54. The use of the loft was, it has often been said, for the deacon to sing the gospel from at high mass on great festivals. This was certainly the case with the stone *pulpita* above the quire screens of collegiate and monastic churches. But, in most parish churches the stair was so narrow and inconvenient that certainly the vestments and probably the temper of the deacon who attempted to climb it would be easily spoiled. In many lofts, it is true, there was an altar. The piscina of one remains in a few churches, as at Little Hereford: there was a chantry founded in 1349 at one in Grantham church, where the screen was a large one of stone. But the habitual use of the loft was as an organ gallery; and the fine screen at Newark-on-Trent still has at its east side the rectangular projection which was occupied by a 'pair of organs.' The rood itself, the great cross bearing the figure of our Lord with statues of St Mary and St John upon either side, stood upon a beam which crossed the chancel arch above the loft. The beam was, of course, painted, and, in

addition to the statues which it carried, bore sockets for candles, which were lighted on festival occasions. The corbels which supported rood beams are sometimes seen: beams themselves, however, do not often remain. There is a finely painted example of one at Tunstead in Norfolk; and another remains at Cullompton in Devon. Here and there, where the beam was fixed in the wall, and had to be sawn away, the end may still be seen. Some screens had no loft: in these cases the rood frequently stood upon the top of the screen. In some cases, as at Llanelieu in Breconshire and Wenhaston in Suffolk, the rood and its attendant figures were fixed upon a painted board which formed a back to the loft, and filled the upper part of the chancel arch. In other places, as at Hickleton, near Doncaster, and Llanbedr-ystrad-yw, they were fixed against the wall above the chancel arch. This would be the case where, as at Hickleton, the arch was low and narrow, and there was no room for a separate beam beneath it. No piece of church furniture is more interesting than the rood screen and its accompaniments: the variety of local design and of its arrangements, and the great beauty of the finished work, make it, of all special topics of ecclesiology, perhaps the most attractive.

§ 55. It has been said before that the hooks by which the Lenten veil was suspended across the chancel arch are still to be seen in several churches.

The western part of the chancel was occupied by the quire, whose stalls were returned along the back of the screen, the rector's stall being the end return stall on the south side. Quire stalls in parish churches were often carved with great refinement and beauty: the stalls at Walpole St Peter have each a stone canopy, formed by recessing panels in the chancel wall. The finest stalls, with their hinged seats, rightly called misericords, and wrongly misereres, are usually to be found in collegiate or chantry churches, like Higham Ferrers or Ludlow, where the chantry priests of the Palmers' guild said their offices together in the high chancel. The stalls of the chantry college at Fotheringhay are now in the churches of Tansor and Benefield; the quire stalls of St Mary's at Nottingham are in the suburban church of Sneinton. An excellent instance of the combination of stalls and rood screen is found in the village church of Ashby St Ledgers, near Daventry, which contains a large amount of old woodwork. In the centre of the quire or, as a gospel-desk, on the north side of the altar would stand the lectern. The number of medieval lecterns remaining in England is not great, the finest being the great brass lectern given by provost Hacomblen to King's college, Cambridge. Lecterns in which the desk takes the form of a bird are sometimes found, as in Norwich cathedral and at Ottery St Mary.

§ 56. When interest was first revived in ecclesiology, the fashion of raising the quire and chancel above the rest of the church, by a number of steps intended to be symbolical, became very prevalent. This, however, was not in keeping with medieval practice. It is true that occasionally chancels were raised high above the rest of the church. At Walpole St Peter the chancel, rebuilt in the fifteenth century, was brought up to the churchyard boundary, and apparently interfered with a right of way which led round the back of the old chancel. It was therefore built with a floor raised high above the nave, and the right of way was preserved by piercing an arch below. St Leonard's at Exeter has a chancel built over an archway which affords access to a narrow street. A church built on a slope, like Tansor, ascends noticeably from west to east. But the ascent is contrived, not by means of flights of steps, but by an inclined plane. As a rule, floors of churches sloped slightly upwards towards the altar. A perfectly level floor gives the false effect in perspective of a downward slope: a floor, on the other hand, with a gradual upward slope has a level effect. The floor of the quire was sometimes elevated by a single shallow step above the floor of the nave: very generally, it was on the same level: at St Michael's, Cambridge, the level was slightly lower. The chancel, again, was a step higher than

the quire, and the altar stood slightly raised upon its own oblong altar pace. The levels at Geddington in Northamptonshire remain much as they were. The quire is on a level with the nave: the chancel is a pace higher, and the altar stands upon its own pace. An inscription round the foot of the chancel wall records the making of the pavement (now renewed) and the *scabella*, by which the foot-paces are almost certainly implied, of the altar in 1369. Round the lower foot-pace of the south chapel is another inscription, apparently of the same date. In no respect have modern restorations been so disastrous as in the altering of original levels, in order to give the altar the elevation which was supposed by the restorers to be necessary.

§ 57. The altar itself, as can be seen from the many altar-slabs which remain, was a long and fairly broad stone table: it was usually less than three feet high, and was covered by a cloth and frontal. It is probable that the frontal, like the vestments of the clergy, followed, in the ordinary parish church, no very strict sequence of colour according to the seasons. For festivals the handsomest and newest frontal and vestments would probably be used. The altar was kept fairly low, to make room for the reredos, which extended across the east wall above the altar, and below the sill of the east window. It will be found that modern restorers, in nine cases out of ten,

have disregarded old English uses, by raising an altar until its upper surface is close to the sill of the window, and then by blocking up part, or even the whole of the window, by reredoses or altar screens of stone or wood. High reredoses and altar screens were not unknown, of course, in England; but the ordinary reredos was a single or double band of carving below the east window, as at Geddington or Ludlow. At Stanion in Northants, the string-courses of the east walls of the chancel and north chapel are raised, below the east windows, to form frames for mural paintings or carved retables above the altar. Sculptured tablets were not rare, and indications of their presence may be traced: in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the alabaster, dug out of the Chellaston 'plaster-pits,' and worked by the 'plasterers' of Nottingham, was used, among other purposes, for such tablets. On the north and south sides of the reredos the altar was enclosed by curtains hung on brass rods projecting from the wall or from upright standards. These curtains, known as riddels, had sockets for candles at the ends of the rods. They appear to be derived from the curtains which hung round the altar canopies of basilican churches, and were drawn at the consecration of the elements. Probably the reredos, in most churches, was formed by a painted cloth—that is, a piece of embroidered tapestry —hung behind the altar, or stretched from the

upright of the one to the upright of the other riddel. It may be added that the arrangement of cross, candles and flower vases on a shelf, or even on several shelves, at the back of the altar, with which we are so familiar, was not frequent in the middle ages. The cross was usually the central carved or embroidered feature of the reredos: one or two lighted candles were placed upon the altar at mass; and flowers and sweet smelling herbs would be strewn at certain seasons on the chancel floor. Richness of colour and simplicity of furniture were the distinguishing features of the medieval altar. There is a curious ledge upon the back part of the upper surface of the crypt altar at Grantham: it actually lies *upon* the altar, and its height, as contrasted with that of the modern gradine or shelf, affords the same contrast that there is between the low foot-paces of the medieval, and the flights of steps of the modern chancel.

§ 58. The statue of the patron saint stood near the altar, on a corbel in the wall, in a canopied recess, or, as at Abbots Kerswell in Devon, where there is a very large figure of the Virgin, in the jamb of a window. In front of the altar, the pyx, or receptacle for the reserved Sacrament, hung by chains from the roof: it was covered by an embroidered veil, which was drawn aside when the pyx was opened. The rest of the ordinary furniture of the chancel was of a more permanent description. The piscina and sedilia, which are

frequently of one date and form part of one design, were on the south side of the chancel, forming arched recesses in the wall. The number of sedilia varied from one to three: more than three are seldom found in a parish church. Permanent stone sedilia were usually regarded as part of the regular furniture of the chancel. Occasionally their place was supplied by the lowering of a window sill; but there were also instances, no doubt, in which the sedile or sedilia were simply wooden chairs placed near the south wall of the chancel. The piscina was frequently supplied with an upper ledge for cruets. In the piscina of the south aisle at Hawton, near Newark, there is an inner recess for this purpose on the east side; at Tansor a shallow niche is provided in the head of the arch of the piscina. The drain of the piscina was usually within the wall; but there are a number of twelfth century, and a few later, examples, in which the bowl forms a projection from the wall, and the drain was contained in a detached column, the base of which is frequently united to the foot of the wall. Projecting bowls are common, with drain-holes which slant downwards into the wall. A piscina is sometimes found in the sill of a window: one at Grantham is fitted with a removable drain, and there are other such examples. A drain in the chancel floor is sometimes found, usually of a rather early period. In addition to the piscina, most churches contain

plain almeries or cupboards, rectangular recesses with rebates for wooden doors: these are generally in the north or east wall of the chancel.

§ 59. More exceptional—indeed, very uncommon—as a piece of furniture, was the permanent Easter sepulchre, which usually was on the north, but sometimes on the south of the chancel. This was the place to which the Host was carried on the evening of Holy Thursday, and left until Easter eve: it was symbolical of the sepulchre of our Lord, and the services which took place in connexion with it were sometimes of a somewhat dramatic character. A permanent Easter sepulchre, like those at Hawton and Heckington, was a luxury. These, and the sepulchre at Navenby, have carvings referring to the story of the Resurrection, and in the lower panels are represented the guards at the tomb. The recess at Hawton, forming a triple opening, has an inner recess at the back, which could be shut and locked. At Heckington and Navenby the recesses are merely single cupboards, surrounded by elaborate carving. Frequently, an almery was used for the purpose; and where, as at Frating in Essex, Claypole in Lincolnshire, or Sefton in Lancashire, an almery is treated with special care, as, for example, with a floral hood-mould, this special use is indicated. There may also have been removable sepulchres of wood: a piece of furniture which remains at Cowthorpe in Yorkshire, is said to be

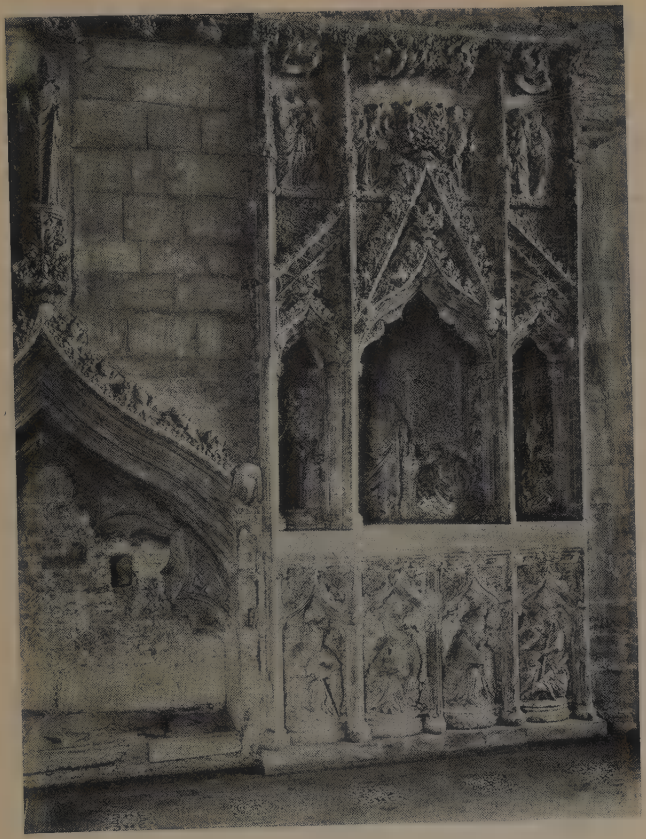


Fig. 18. Hawton, Notts: Easter sepulchre.

one. Another was made for St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, in 1440. Certainly, the sepulchre was often a temporary arrangement, like the *reposoir* in a French church to-day. Thomas Meyring of Newark directed his burial to take place 'where the sepulchre of our Lord was wont to be set up at Easter.' A founder's tomb near an altar was also used for the sepulchre, the receptacle for the Host being probably placed inside the tomb-recess or against it. At Sibthorpe near Newark, the small sepulchre is immediately above the founder's tomb: this was probably the case at Fledborough. At Owston, near Doncaster, a tomb-recess in the north chancel wall is often called the Easter sepulchre, and a projecting stone at one side of it is pointed out as a stone for the watcher who kept guard over the tomb at Easter. The majority of Easter sepulchres which are left belong to the fourteenth century. The imposing structure at Northwold in Norfolk, which is on the south of the chancel, is of the fifteenth century, and, in at least one example, at Wymondham in Norfolk, also on the south side, there are details which approach the Renaissance period. The frequent identity of the founder's tomb with the Easter sepulchre, for which there is documentary evidence, is proved further by the tombs of the rector and vicar, under whose auspices, in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, the chancels of South Pool and Woodleigh churches in south

Devon were restored. These are vaulted recesses north of the altar, containing table tombs with effigies, and a large amount of florid carving, which shews signs of Renaissance influence. On the wall at the back of either tomb are sculptures dealing with the burial and resurrection of our Lord, which clearly point to the use of the tombs at Easter, and justify the name of Easter sepulchre, frequently applied to them. A third tomb of rather later date is at West Alvington, in the same neighbourhood: its details were suggested by South Pool and Woodleigh, but the brasses of the back wall are gone, and its inclusion in the list of Easter sepulchres is doubtful. There is a curious late thirteenth century piece of work, projecting inwards from the north wall of the chancel at Twywell, near Kettering. A tomb-recess forms the lowest stage; above this is a double almery, which may have been an Easter sepulchre, and above this, again, is a sloping stone desk with a book-rest for the reader of the gospel. Stone gospel-desks are found in a few Derbyshire churches, like Crich, Spondon, and Etwall; and in a few other rare instances. A founder's tomb is, of course, by no means an invariable feature of a chancel. The natural place for the burial of the founder of a chantry would be close to the altar where his chantry was celebrated; and often, as at Grantham, the presence of a tomb in an aisle wall indicates the existence of a chantry altar near that spot.

§ 60. The sacristy has been referred to in the previous chapter; and with this description of the furniture of the chancel, our account of the English parish church is nearly come to an end. Few persons who are in the habit of visiting parish churches will fail to meet with exceptional or unique features. For example, in the north wall of the chancel at Scawton in north Yorkshire, there is a long oblong trough, with a drain in the wall behind it, the use of which is difficult to conjecture. At Tunstead in Norfolk, there is a narrow platform behind the altar, the whole width of the east wall. At its south end is a stair from the floor of the chancel; and near the stair is a door leading into a chamber below the platform. This narrow room, far too small for a sacristy, is lighted by a grating in the floor of the platform. It is supposed that this was an arrangement for the exhibition of relics. At Tanfield, near Ripon, there is a little cell-like recess in the wall between the chancel and north chapel, with a window commanding the altar. The problems which are set by these details bring us by degrees into relation with the whole of medieval life; and the history of the parish church becomes an important part of the social history of the parish. The magnificent tombs of the Marmions at Tanfield also recall to us an artistic feature of the parish church which opens out a wide field, and can be dealt with here only so far as the

tombs themselves afford evidence as to the date of the part of the church in which they occur.

§ 61. The actual development of the parish church comes to an end with the Reformation. The building of great churches, cathedral and monastic, ceased with the suppression of the monasteries. The suppression of the chantries, and the new doctrines which it symbolised, did away with one object which had been a powerful consideration with the lay benefactor of parish churches. Henceforward the best work of those English masons who, in every county, had for generations shaped the course of medieval art, and, with it, the best work of the wood-carvers and glaziers, is found in private houses. In the early part of the seventeenth century, under the influence of Laud, much restoration and rebuilding was done. Wood-carvers filled many churches with furniture of great beauty and historical value. Churches like St John's at Leeds, or the little chapel of Carlton Husthwaite in Yorkshire, are, in stone and woodwork alike, complete examples of the work of this period. Brancepeth, Sedgefield, and Eaglescliffe in Durham; Burneston in north Yorkshire; and, above all, Croscombe in Somerset, contain wooden furniture which one would not willingly exchange for medieval work. But, in spite of the richness and picturesqueness of seventeenth century woodwork, the art of the Laudian revival had no power to strike out new lines

for itself. The chancels of Astley Abbots in Shropshire, Kelmarsh in Northamptonshire, and Barsham in Suffolk, interest us by their quaint adaptation of Gothic detail: they tell us nothing new. The art of the mason, as regards the parish church, is exhausted.

§ 62. At a later date, Wren built parish churches with an extraordinary elasticity of style and plan. But the study of Wren's plans is simply the study of the plans of an individual architect: they are the outcome of his relation to the fashions of his day, and his unrivalled capacity for dealing with them. He established firmly the use of a modified Palladian style in church architecture, which his successors imitated until nothing further could be done with it. But, when we look at his churches, we never can forget the architect behind them. St Martin's-in-the-Fields and St Mary-le-Strand, by Gibbs; St Philip's at Birmingham, by Archer, fine churches though they are, fall short of his designs; and we instinctively compare and contrast their plan and elevation with the models supplied by Wren. In the medieval parish church, on the other hand, the individual architect had no place; the whole artistic activity of an age was represented; the builder was an original artist, and a member of a nation of artists; and the development of the parish church was the work of a national interest, not merely confined to one highly specialised profession. When the Gothic revival came in the early

nineteenth century, it was thought that medieval art was once more re-born. But, when we look to-day at the scholarly and often extremely beautiful work of artists like Pugin, Sir Gilbert Scott, Street, Pearson, Butterfield, Bodley, or the younger Gilbert Scott, we still feel the force of individual design and style rather than the force of a great collective movement. All these, like Wren, have added individual contributions to church planning and decoration; but their art is a by-path of national life, and is merely the result of a purely individual type of thought.

§ 63. At the same time, to say this is not to belittle post-Reformation church architecture. It is simply to point out the contrast between the work of the architect and the work of the medieval mason, between a sporadic development of art, and a development which was general in every part of the country.

But, while the work of later generations differs in quality and spirit from that of the medieval craftsman, while it is necessarily more sophisticated and less spontaneous than his, no greater mistake can be made than to drive it out of our churches. The Reformation and Cromwell have been made responsible for much destruction: yet no one has destroyed so lightheartedly as the modern restorer, in his efforts to bring back churches to what is called their 'original state.' To-day, people are waking up to the value of post-Reformation masonry and furniture. They realise

that when an eighteenth century church is swept away, and a handsome building, in an eclectic Gothic style, decked with the best products of modern arts and crafts, rises in its place, the advantage is questionable. Not merely does much good furniture inevitably perish, but a link with the past is destroyed. Eighteenth century pews may not be altogether suited to a fifteenth century church; but they remind us at any rate that the fabric in which they stand has a continuous history. The age which produced them followed its own taste and worked on its own lines, and did not merely strive after an ideal of harmonious imitation. Not only the work of recent centuries has been touched, but medieval work has been altered: screens have been mutilated and removed, old glass has been destroyed, even whole fabrics have been rebuilt with very slight regard to their earlier plan. It can never be impressed too strongly upon the average Englishman that, quite apart from their religious associations, the parish churches of this country form, as a body, one of the most remarkable historical monuments which any European nation possesses. We may regret, perhaps, that past generations have tampered with them; but for that very reason we should hesitate to tamper with them ourselves, or to replace incongruous work of the past by imitative work of our own. We may well use our individual energy and our new ideas in adding to

their number; but our treatment of the older work, where it positively calls for renewal, should be tender, conservative, and self-effacing. The excellence of the medieval mason's work consists largely in his avoidance of self-consciousness, in its perfectly natural and spontaneous feeling: if we attempt to impose our individuality upon his work, we are in danger of supplying to future and, it may be hoped, wiser generations a contrast from which they will not fail to draw a melancholy profit.

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6. The historical aspect of the parish church is treated excellently by E. L. Cutts, *Parish Priests and their People in the Middle Ages* (London, 1898). But, to gain an adequate knowledge of this side of the question, the study of original documents is necessary, and chiefly of the contents of episcopal registers. Of these invaluable texts some have been printed in full, and of others there are printed abstracts, but the vast majority remain in manuscript. The fullest printed series is the *Exeter Episcopal Registers* (ed. F. C. Hingeston-Randolph), covering the period 1258–1455: the York registers from 1216 to 1285 (ed. J. Raine and W. Brown for the Surtees Society), and the Hereford registers from 1275 to 1327 (ed. W. W. Capes and others for the Cantilupe and Canterbury and York Societies) are also full and accurate editions. Much information with regard to the foundation of chantries and other important subjects may be obtained from the Calendars of the Patent Rolls and of Letters from the Papal Registers, published under the direction of the Master of the Rolls. The Chantry Certificate Rolls and Inventories of Church Goods drawn up between 1547 and 1549 are also sources of great value: these have been printed for some counties, but the greater number are still unpublished.

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